The Washington Monthly

NOVEMBER 1995 $3.95 ($4.95 CAN)

Law school's golden handcuffs

The right affirmative action

James Fallows on Ben Bradlee & Matthew Cooper on Colin Powell

Weather
Today: Mostly cloudy, humid, showers. High 77. Low 66.
Thursday: Cloudy, humid, windy, rain. High 75. Low 68.
Yesterday: Temp. range: 64-83. AQI: Moderate-65.

The Washington Post

FINAL

118TH YEAR .... No. 303 — A COMPOSITE OF *POST* FRONT PAGE STORIES — 25¢

Levin, Turner Agree on Terms

Wall Street Thrilled

By Paul Fiehl
Washington Post Staff Writer

September 23—Time Warner Inc. and Ted Turner's Turner Broadcasting System agreed yesterday to join forces in a $7.5 billion merger, the latest in a string that is transforming ownership and management of the media and entertainment industries.

As the largest media compan[illegible] the world, Time Warner-Tu[illegible] would jointly shape images [illegible] information that touch virtually ev[illegible] American and a growing nu[illegible]

See MERGER, A4, Col. 3

Chase, Chemical to Merge, Creating Largest U.S. Bank

$10.4 Billion Deal Reflects Consolidation Trend in Industry

By Jay Mathews
Washington Post Staff Writer

NEW YORK, AUG. 28—Chemical Banking Corp. and the Chase Manhattan Corp. today announced plans to merge and create the nation's largest bank.

Financial analysts and investors hailed the agreement to create a giant new bank, which will carry Chase Manhattan's name but be led by Chemical's chairman and [illegible]

Like other recent bank mergers, the Chase-Chemical agreement was encouraged by major investors who think the institutions can operate more efficiently and afford the talent and new technologies that will keep earnings and stock prices high. Rumors of the merger have pushed Chemical and Chase stock up in recent months and shares in both compan[illegible]

with middle-class retirement savings. Michael Price, who runs the New Jersey-based Mutual Series funds, disclosed in April that his company owned 6.1 percent of Chase and openly encouraged the bank to look for a rich buyer.

Chase and Chemical bank tellers are unlikely to celebrate the $10.4 billion merger, however. Shipley said his first assignment is to cut [illegible]00 jobs from the merged com[illegible]'s total work force of 75,000 [illegible]e $1.5 billion a year. He said [illegible]ped the banking industry's [illegible]tural turnover of about 20 [illegible]t a year would keep firings [illegible]imum.

[illegible] cutbacks will affect bank [illegible]ces in 39 states and 51 [illegible]ies. The new company plans

MERGER, A10, Col 1

CLASS, NOT RACE

The Washington Post's racial politics are making headlines. But the real story is its indifference to the average American. BY AMY WALDMAN

Bagels Not Roy Roger[illegible]

By Steven Pearlstein
Washington Post Staff Writer

June 14—Oy vey, partner.

The Roy Rogers restaurant chain announced yesterday it was returning to its 'authentic Western roots' with some new offerings from the chuck wagon, including a reprise for the [illegible] 400-restaurant chain, which has pitched camp in Linthicum, Md. "Our cus[illegible]

Roy's breakfast sandwich probably will not appeal to your typical kosher cowhand—there's a ham omelet in between them there bagel halves. But no matter—at $1.49 it has become the second-most popular item on Roy's breakfast menu since test marketing began less than two months ago.

Lox-and-bagel purists will find much to kvetch about in this latest heresy. But at least give Roy's credit for some measure of authenticity—they get their bagels delivered fresh-frozen from Arnie's Bagelicious in Brooklyn, where they know from bagels.

"I've been in bagels 20 years myself," said Arnie. That's Arnie Cassale, actually.

See BAGELS, A3, Col. 4

[illegible]n Rates

Alan Greenspan

[illegible] mortgage rates at relatively low levels, some economists said, by holding down long-term interest rates. The yield on the benchmark 30 1/4-year Treasury bond fell to 7.36 percent yesterday from 7.50 percent Monday, and the yield on the five-year Treasury bill, to which many adjustable-rate mortgages are

The half percentage point increases in two key interest rates—bolder moves than many economists had anticipated—pushed the rates to their highest levels in three years.

The increases were quickly passed on to consumers as several large commercial banks, led by

The Fed board of governors voted unanimously to raise the discount rate, the rate the Fed charges banks for loans, to 4 percent from 3.5 percent.

The Fed also raised its target for the federal funds rate, the rate banks charge each other for overnight loans, to 4.75 percent from 4.25

See FED, A10, Col. 2

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Don't Worry. Be Happy!
• James Glassman: The income gap—where's the problem?
OP-ED, *page A-28*

Be Happy, Part Two!
• Robert Samuelson: You're getting richer, you just don't know it.
OP-ED, *page A-28*

Great Gas Mileage!
• The Lexus '96 model rides like a dream. Third in a six part series on luxury car performance.

Wall Street Soars in Stock-Buying Frenzy

By Brett Fromson and Steven Pearlstein
Washington Post Staff Writers

August 27, 1994—The stock market has awakened from its summer slumber and pushed the Dow Jones industrial average up 126 points this week.

Many investment strategists are saying the economy is growing nicely with little inflation, and that should translate into a long period of good corporate profits.

Yesterday's 51-point rally in the Dow—on top of a 71-point gain on Wednesday—was sparked by another report indicating that the economic recovery is slowing to a more sustainable pace—one that is less likely to trigger inflation.

The Commerce Department report said the gross domestic product, the broadest measure of the economy's growth, increased at a 3.8 percent annual rate for the second quarter of the year, a number that was revised from the original estimate of 3.7 percent.

Investors had forecast an even higher rate. In the logic of the stock market, what seems to be good news—a roaring economy—actually can depress investments because of the inflation that can accompany fast growth. Inflation eats away at the future stream of profits, dividends and interest income to owners of capital.

So when the GDP figure came in at 3.8 percent yesterday rather than a widely expected 4.1 percent, investors celebrated by buying. The Dow closed at 3881.05.

It was just such a mild deceleration in economic growth that the Federal Reserve had in mind last week, when it raised short-term interest rates by half a percentage point. When the Fed nudges short-term rates higher, the move tends to reassure invest[illegible] forecas[illegible] encou[illegible]

Sec[illegible]

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Letters

Taxing Arguments

Professor Paul Krugman has been irritating conservatives for years with his assertions about the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. On that score, his October screed ("What the Public Doesn't Know Can't Hurt Us") celebrates the new book by Edward N. Wolff and trashes that by House Majority Leader Dick Armey, both Ph.D. economists. He charges that Armey is "lying" about the "facts." It has become clear that Krugman is simply examining snapshots of the economy taken over time via the National Income Accounts, designed by his fellow Keynesians. There he discovers a divergence of both income and wealth at the statistical extremities. Alas, the snapshots never reveal who these people are who are getting richer and poorer, how many rich have gone bankrupt between snapshots, how many paupers have hit the lottery. These static photos do not reveal how many people with no incomes have come into the job market to earn low incomes, thereby increasing the number of statistical poor.

This time around at least Krugman reveals his basic political assumptions. In an economy where people catch fish, he says, incomes can remain within a range he considers reasonable, with taxes only needed to support invalids, widows, and orphans. In an economy of gold prospectors, where some strike it rich and some strike out, Krugman finds it "easy to imagine a broad public demand that those who have been lucky enough to find gold be required to share a significant fraction of their winnings with those who have not."

Here is the weakness in his demand-side model, which invites a benign, democratic socialism that can only stagnate. This is because a dynamic capitalistic system can function with taxation of income or wealth, but it cannot survive the taxation of success.

All growth is the result of risk-taking, a purely supply-side concept that is not active in Krugman's analytical framework (as far as I can see). For a society to tax those of its risk-takers who are by-passing the easy fish to go for the gold will per force reduce the number of prospectors. This lowers the discovery of gold that can be taxed as income, when it is mined, and reduces the mining of ore that can be taxed as wealth, when it is spent.

The statistics that bother Dr. Krugman have no positive utility. They only nudge Democratic politicians toward perverse policy actions, which cause them to lose elections. The funk in American society today results from the significant taxation of success, i.e. capital gains, which the professor continues to justify and advocate.

Jude Wanniski
Morristown, NJ

Paul Krugman responds: My article argued that conservatives have a congenital problem acknowledging simple facts about income distribution. Jude Wanniski's letter is a perfect illustration of my point.

Wanniski dismisses the vast array of evidence on soaring income and wealth inequality, which is derived from many different sources, because he says it is based on national income accounts "devised by Keynesians." The thousands of economists, of all political persuasions, who have found the national income accounts invaluable to their research will be surprised to learn that these data are useless. But what is really strange about Wanniski's complaint is that at no point in my article did I refer to national income account data. The only income numbers I cited were family income numbers from the Census—the same numbers that Dick Armey used to document his claim that Reaganomics was a great success.

In other words, as long as a given set of numbers seem to say what Mr. Wanniski wants to hear, they are valid and useful. As soon as they tell a different story, however—and in particular, as soon as we learn that Armey has been dishonest in reporting what the data actually say—we suddenly learn that these are invalid statistics foisted on us by leftist economists.

Actually, I envy Wanniski. Like any serious economist, I have often had the awkward experience of finding that a pet theory is contradicted by the facts. But Wanniski clearly never has this problem. What a charmed life he leads!

Howard's End

Philip K. Howard makes several excellent points in "Regulatory Reform: The Case for Common Sense" (September). He argues that regulators be freed from rigid rules and be allowed to use their own intelligence and professional training in responding to specific situations. Give regulators discretion to use their own common sense, he says, and then hold them fully accountable for their decisions.

Today, one area where civil servants clearly have that kind of discretion is law enforcement. But here accountability seems sadly deficient. The horrid example of former Los Angeles police officer Mark Fuhrman is bringing to the surface similar stories from big cities all over America. One wonders how many stories are lingering beneath the surface. In the cases of too many law enforcement officers, their discretion to enforce the law became a consistent pattern of an abuse of authority.

Yes, regulators, like police officers, should be free to do their jobs and to meet each situation with a reasoned and appropriate response. But the public

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must be convinced that its servants are acting responsibly and within the law, and this requires a credible plan for holding them accountable.
Roger T. Johnson
Manhattan, KS

Special Gift Offer

My most recent copy of the *Monthly* arrived late, in a plastic bag that had been torn open by human hands. The magazine was dog-eared and well-thumbed. It looks as though a postal worker opened and read the magazine before delivering it to me.

I have to say, it's nice to know that somebody within the post office bureaucracy is reading the *Monthly*. If this letter is printed and that person reads it, he should know that I'd be glad to buy him a subscription.
Michael Stern
New York, NY

Insightful and Accurate

I was most impressed with your insightful and accurate story, "You Can't Fix It If You Don't Raise the Hood," in the July/August issue. The point that we need to determine whether agencies meet their goals—or what their goals are—is a simple, yet brilliant, recommendation.

By the way, I am not someone who wants to be coddled by bureaucrats and federal programs. I am a conservative, church-going Democrat; in fact, I was a Republican at the time of our nation's last presidential election.

But when it comes to the new Republican mavericks in Congress, I have to believe they are not really interested in improving government. If they were, why not make watchdog agencies like the GAO and OTA stronger rather than weaker?
Mark V. Bodziak
Torrance, CA

The *Monthly* Comes in Handy

I just got the chance to read the excellent piece on the *MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour* ("MacNeil Error," July/August 1995). The problem here is what you could call a "two-handed" approach to the news. "On the one hand..." they say. "And on the other hand...". The problem is that the viewer—not knowing enough to make sense of what the biased opposing experts are claiming—gets totally confused as to the truth. This may seem to be the more democratic approach to serving up the news, but democracy can only work with an informed electorate. Let's have someone who knows both "hands" of an issue join in each discussion to keep each hand a bit more honest.
Dr. Lester E. Block
Minneapolis, MN

Correction

Due to a typesetting error in our October issue, the last line was dropped from Taylor Branch's book review on page 51. Here is the last paragraph of his piece in its entirety: "Nixon knew that Wallace voters were becoming natural Republicans. With revenue sharing—his version of today's block grants—Nixon moved from Lincoln Republicanism toward a posture compatible with Wallace's version of states' rights. From his sickbed, Wallace watched the white South follow the path he had marked toward an anti-government ideology that the Republican party adopted. For more than a century, his Democrats had straddled a core identity that upheld both the common people and the segregated South. Now segregation was being lost, formally, and at the same time Wallace's racial alchemy was eating away at the party's distinctive bond with ordinary citizens. Today Wallace's legacy is clear. He enticed the children of FDR Democrats to think of government not as savior, refuge, compact of fellow citizens—or even as their problem—but as the enemy. As an old populist Democrat who still loves to disdain bigshots for 'sipping their martinis with their little fingers up in the air,' Wallace nurses some misgivings. Carter quotes his brooding farewell from office: 'I hope the rich and powerful don't take over now.'"

The Washington Monthly

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Tilting at Windmills

After worrying about the issue for years and going back and forth on it more times than I would like to admit, I have finally come to agree with Clarence Thomas that affirmative action—to the extent it leads to the advancement of the unqualified—is wrong. There is no better proof than Justice Thomas himself....

The Simpson verdict has to rank as the most conspicuous example of affirmative action at its worst: wrong done to right other wrongs. As *The Washington Post*'s black sports columnist Michael Wilbon observed, "A lot of black people ... see this as payback, even if the score is still about one million to one. They feel the chickens might have come home to roost yesterday for all our relatives and ancestors who've been beaten and raped and lynched and murdered by whites without any consequence whatsoever."

Wilbon, however, goes on to see the real point: "Personally, I think a better measure of justice is seeing the man who murdered Medgar Evers convicted some 30 years after the act." The right revenge for an unjust act is to seek justice, not to commit another unjust act....

Although I'm not a big fan of Marcia "I need more money for my wardrobe" Clark, I must say I felt for her as she was constantly interrupted during her final argument. Having practiced law myself, I know how hard it is to hold on to one's train of thought and maintain an air of calm composure as you try to conceal trembling hands and knees. The repeated interruptions Clark was subjected to must have been devastating for her. What most non-lawyers don't understand is why defense lawyers feel free to employ outrageous tactics like these: Although the defense can appeal a guilty verdict, the prosecution cannot appeal a verdict of innocence. Thus, prosecutors must be on pins and needles to avoid an error that would give the defense the grounds for appeal. The defense, however, does not have similar constraints on its behavior.

Shouldn't the judge be allowed to explain to the jury why the defense thinks it can get away with tactics like repeated objections on points he has already decided? And if defense lawyers persist in such tactics, shouldn't the judge tell them that, at the end of the trial, they will be jailed for contempt of court with the length of the sentence dependent on whether the misbehavior continues?...

I have to confess that I have been a faithful fan of the Miss America contest for far too many decades. This year the big issue was whether to keep or eliminate the swimsuit competition. Television viewers were asked to call in and cast their votes. Then the result, a victory for swimwear, was announced. The announcement came, not from Atlantic City, but from Omaha. And the person who announced the vote was surrounded by people wearing white coats. Why Omaha? Why white coats?

For those of you similarly mystified, I offer these possible explanations: Maybe the promoters thought the average citizen would have more confidence in a count made in the nation's heartland than one made next door to the Trump Casino. And the white coats were probably intended to convey a zeal for scientific accuracy....

The Packwood diaries are full of revelations of the seamier side of life on Capitol Hill. My favorite comes when Packwood hits up his lobbyist friends for help in finding work for his estranged wife so he won't have to pay her as much alimony. One lobbyist said he could offer $37,500 over five years for part-time work and added, "If you're chairman of the Finance Committee, I can probably double that." (For more on the Packwood diaries, see page 17.)...

The fact that the Republicans are abolishing a good agency, the Office of Technology Assessment, went largely unnoted by the press as the OTA closed its doors on September 29. Of the major newspapers, magazines, and television networks, only *The New York Times* (Keith Bradsher) and ABC News (Peter Jennings and Beth Nissen) carried news stories making it clear that a useful agency was going down the tubes. Earlier op-ed pieces by Daniel Greenberg and David Broder in *The Washington Post* supported the OTA, but the paper's only news story by Stephen Barr failed to give either a positive or negative evaluation of the agency. *The Wall Street Journal*'s news story reflected the editorial page's brain-dead conservatism by praising the elimination of OTA as evidence of the GOP's effectiveness in cutting back government. Outside of Washington, we

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could find only *Tulsa World*, *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and specialized technology publications speaking on the OTA's behalf....

But if ABC deserves an A for its OTA coverage, it gets an F for its shameful cave-in to Philip Morris. The amount of the settlement—$15 million—is five times the largest verdict ever awarded in a libel suit. The possible error in ABC's story was so slight and the amount of truth in its story was so great that a jury would have probably found for ABC or at worst awarded token damages to Philip Morris. One therefore cannot help suspecting that ABC simply wanted to avoid a contingent liability on its books, however remote the contingency might be, and to avoid the expense of protracted legal proceedings. ABC's sin was compounded by its agreement to surrender the evidence it had collected to Philip Morris, which is not likely to eagerly share it with the public.

Small impecunious publications are subject to blackmail by libel suit. They either apologize or face legal expenses they don't have the funds to pay. But ABC is neither small nor poor. There is no excuse for what it did....

The good news is that, for once, the tobacco companies appear not to have escaped justice. A California man, Milton Horowitz, who has mesothelioma, a type of cancer that is frequently caused by asbestos, has won a $2 million verdict from Lorillard Tobacco Company, which during the fifties made Kent cigarettes with an asbestos filter without warning people like Horowitz, who smoked Kents, of the danger....

When D.C.'s mayor, Marion Barry, was trying to rent more office space for city workers last month, Councilman Harold Brazil asked why more space was needed: "We downsized 3,000 people, and we're downsizing 2,000 more."

I have an explanation, using the federal government as an example. It has approximately the same number of workers, or even slightly fewer, than it had 30 years ago. Yet these workers occupy 66 percent more office space. The reason is something called grade creep. Today the percentage of employees in the middle and upper grades of the civil service (CS-12 to 15) is three and a half times greater than it was in the mid-1950s. Since your office grows bigger as your grade goes higher, the need for office space grows even if the number of employees stays the same or even decreases. This is space creep.

In explaining why the District still needed more office space, a city official said that 60 percent of the 3,200 who had been downsized were "field workers, without desks." This was a revealing, doubtless unconscious, admission. The District is supposed to be cutting where the fat is, in the middle and upper grades. Now we learn it cut the people in the field, who are usually the ones who do the real work of collecting the garbage, maintaining streets and public buildings, checking your books in and out of the library, policing the streets, putting out the fires....

It is true that the D.C. government is a parody of other local and state governments. But the originals are recognizable. In other words they have, though not to the same absurd degree, the same problems and weaknesses that the District government has. A few weeks ago, I spoke to a group of top Virginia state officials. I told them I was going to describe the culture of bureaucracy as I had observed it in Washington, giving examples such as grade and space creep, and I invited them to tell me if there was any essential difference between the situation I described and what they had seen in their own state government. The answer was that there was no essential difference.

This is important to understand because state and local governments are where the government has grown in the last 50 years. Today they employ five times more people than the federal government. Simply by cutting the federal government, we are doing little to reduce the total bureaucracy nationwide. And if you don't figure out how to solve the problems of bureaucracy at all levels, citizens will continue to experience frustration dealing with government.

The greatest problem, practically all the Virginia officials agreed, was the need for more freedom to hire good people and to fire the deadwood. This has long seemed to me the major obstacle to efficiency in the federal government. Yet when I was asked by the Virginians if anyone was trying to do anything about the problem, I had to say that beyond *The Washington Monthly*, there appeared to be no one....

Disciplinary procedures in the civil service are generally laughable. Everyone knows it is next-to-impossible to fire anyone, but few outsiders realize how rarely even a wrist is slapped. Several years ago, three male Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents held a *Playboy* model in a back room of the Toronto airport, not for a few minutes but for several hours while they asked for sexual favors. Finally, she was rescued by the Canadian police. What, after an investigation that took three years, was the "punishment" of the INS officials who had inexcusably detained her? A five-day suspension and a transfer to another city....

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The blunt truth about government at all levels is that the personnel are not good enough. It's been 30 years since government was considered anything remotely resembling a glamorous or even desirable place to work. Yet, as Gareth Cook points out in this issue (see page 38), there are lots of interesting jobs in the government, a lot more interesting than the big law firms that Gibson Cromwell (see page 33) explains the brightest of our youth are now attracted to....

And those of us who are critical of bureaucracy must also acknowledge its triumphs, from the post office of the thirties, forties, and fifties, to the NASA of the sixties, to the military of the Persian Gulf War. Recently, we at the *Monthly* saw another triumph—a small one to be sure but one that was important for us.

We had sent out 35,000 letters to potential subscribers. Three weeks after the mailing was supposed to have been made, there were no responses. Usually they begin to come in after 7 or 8 days. So it looked like the Postal Service had lost the mail. We called to ask them to try to find out what had happened and launched our own investigation. Two problems emerged. Our mailer had lied about the date of the mailing, which had actually been dropped four or five days later than the date we had been told, and the firm that was to receive the responses had lied about there being no response or had negligently failed to check its mailroom where hundreds of responses could have been found. In other words, it was the two private-sector firms that screwed up, not the government. The Postal Service had done what it was supposed to do and played a major role in finding out what the other guys had done wrong. Of the many helpful postal workers we dealt with during this scare—for the *Monthly* losing 35,000 pieces of mail would have been a major tragedy—we especially want to thank Robert Nacke for his prompt and diligent investigation....

The *Post*'s Michael Wilbon, the same fellow who wrote those wise words about the Simpson verdict, has a suggestion for NFL football

players: Go out on strike to get grass fields to replace the artificial turf that has caused so many injuries. A wonderful idea. Too often employees use the power of a strike threat only to get higher salaries. Why not use it to protect their safety? And why not use it to protect the public? Air traffic controllers could strike to protest understaffing at crowded airports. Newspaper and magazine reporters could strike to get their employers to stop accepting cigarette and liquor advertising. My old friend James Fallows, whose review of Ben Bradlee's new book you will find on page 44, once wrote an article for this magazine in the seventies proposing just such a strategy....

Speaking of old friends, I called one at the Peace Corps the other day at 5:05 p.m. The switchboard was shut down. A recording told me to call between nine and five. During the sixties at the Peace Corps, 100 percent of the staff was still there at 5:30, 20 percent at 6:30, and 10 percent was still slaving away at 7:30. Maybe there are staff members who work late today, but if so and if they want the public to reach them, why don't they use voice mail or the spell-out-the-name by touch tone that many firms use, or why don't they just keep the switchboard open?...

Newt Gingrich and his gang are trying to weaken the anti-fraud provisions of the Medicare program. Newt says that it's more important to lock up murderers and rapists than dishonest doctors. "Once we start getting some vacant jail space, I'd be glad to look into [doing something about Medicare fraud]." You don't need jail space to fine and take away the licenses of crooked doctors. Newt's own Congressional Budget Office estimates that relaxing the anti-fraud provisions will cost $1.1 billion. All evidence is that we could save billions more by making the anti-fraud provisions not weaker but tougher.

What has happened is that the Republicans have, in order to get the American Medical Association's support for the GOP's Medicare proposals, cut a deal with the AMA that would, among other things,

Roman Genn

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make it easier for doctors to give kickbacks for patient referrals and to steer patients to laboratories that are owned by and give their profits to the doctors, who thus are less likely to be objective in their choice of a laboratory, or, what's worse, in determining whether lab work is needed at all....

A retired judge recently sued an Oregon lawyer for $150,000. The grounds: She had been injured when she tripped over the lawyer's briefcase. This may make you wonder whatever happened to the Republicans' promise to reduce the amount of frivolous litigation. The answer is that there seems to be a stalemate between House and Senate versions. Cynics suspect that the stalemate may be allowed to continue because the issue is such a lucrative generator of campaign contributions. Lawyers are eager to derail reform while businesses are equally eager for it to succeed.

I remain convinced that the most promising reform is "loser pays," which means that the loser pays the winner's legal fees, and consequently plaintiffs and defendants with weak cases will be discouraged while those with strong cases will be encouraged. It would, more than any other reform, prevent blackmail litigation in which plaintiffs pursue weak cases in the hope of getting a settlement because the defendant doesn't want to pay the legal fees or the defendant persists with a weak case in order to get a deserving plaintiff to give up because of mounting legal costs. Unfortunately, loser pays is not a part of either the House or Senate bills....

A trend we've been worrying about has come to pass. The light-truck craze that has Americans driving to their shopping centers in Range Rovers is now causing an upswing in average fuel consumption and threatening to reverse the improvement in air quality that has occurred in recent years. Four out of 10 new passenger vehicles sold are light trucks. Their average gas mileage is 20 per gallon while cars get 28. Shouldn't the government do something? Of course it should. But you know how the Republicans hate government regulation, even when it protects clean air. So the House of Representatives has forbidden any increase in fuel-economy standards by the Department of Transportation....

The *Post*'s Bob Woodward elicited these contrasting explanations from Colin Powell and the late Les Aspin about what went wrong in Somalia. Powell attributed Aspin's "inattention" to Somalia to his preference for dealing with the intellectual as opposed to the operational side of defense issues. Aspin, on the other hand, said that Powell was not sufficiently attentive to the Somalia disaster because it came during the "endless ceremonies" marking the conclusion of his services as chief of staff: "Colin was taking his victory lap."

Although I'm much more of an admirer than a critic of General Powell, the evidence in this case suggests that Powell may have been thinking about something other than Somalia. According to an Associated Press account of a report by members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Powell said he "could not recall" a key decision about Somalia. If he wasn't guilty of inattention, then the only other conclusion can be that he is practicing the grand old bureaucratic art of CYA....

During his interview with O.J. Simpson, Bill Carter of *The New York Times* says he was struck at how "obsessed" Simpson was with "incredibly picayune little things," minor errors he claimed were made by the press or by prosecutors. I had the same experience with guilty defendants when I was practicing law. They were always grabbing you by the sleeve to say "By God, I wasn't wearing a red tie—it was brown." Even though the color of the tie had absolutely nothing to do with his guilt or innocence, my client would insist that I expose the error to the judge and jury. Focusing on unjust irrelevancies helps the guilty work up an indignation that I think finally convinces them that they are the victim....

Republican tax breaks for the rich include: a dramatic cut in the capital gains rate that would cost $25 billion per year when fully phased in; a $500-per-child tax credit that low-income families would not be able to take advantage of, but that families making $200,000 or more could; and a repeal of the alternative minimum tax, which means companies with big profits and clever lawyers could find enough loopholes to avoid federal income taxes completely and get away with it.

What's most maddening about the changes in the tax code is that Republicans are bending over backwards to betray their party's principles in order to cut corners and take care of the wealthy. The party of "work, not welfare" for example, is cutting the Earned Income Tax Credit—the program Ronald Reagan called the best anti-poverty initiative ever developed because it rewards work, not laziness. And the party that is supposed to believe in "running government like a business" is forbidding the Federal Communications Commission from auctioning off broadcast frequencies that could bring in an estimated $37 billion dollars on the open market. If a CEO did that, he'd get fired....

—Charles Peters

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Where There's a Living Will...

We spend billions of dollars on health care that patients don't need and don't want

BY ERIC LINDBLOM

What lesson did Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis leave for Medicare reform? After she was diagnosed with lymphatic cancer, she drafted a legal document—a "living will"—that explained in precise terms how she wished to be cared for in her final days. She made it clear that she didn't want artificial life support or "heroic measures" to prolong her life. Ms. Onassis died peacefully in her New York City apartment on May 19, 1994.

So far, Congress has not paid any attention to Ms. Onassis's example during its ongoing debate over reducing federal Medicare costs—but it should. Right now, well over a tenth of all Medicare dollars pay for care provided in the last 30 days of patients' lives. Some of that care is necessary and proper, but much is not. In one survey of 1,400 doctors and nurses, 65 percent admitted providing unnecessary treatment to terminally ill patients. If more Medicare patients used living wills to block such unnecessary and unwanted last-minute procedures, the savings could be substantial.

Congress could make this happen by requiring all Medicare patients to have a living will that clearly sets forth what kinds of treatments they do and do not want if they are near death and unable to communicate their instructions personally. Patients would not be coerced into foregoing care. They would have the clear option of specifically rejecting or demanding such things as cardiac resuscitation, mechanical respiration, artificial nutrition, or antibiotics in the event that they become permanently unconscious or irreversibly brain-damaged while in a terminal condition. They could also demand that doctors take all available steps to reduce pain and suffering, which, amazingly enough, doctors often do not do.

Although these Medicare patients could demand that everything possible be done to extend their lives until the last minute, polls and studies indicate that more than two-thirds would use the living wills to reject both heroic measures and more standard forms of last-minute care. And if two-thirds of the nearly two million Medicare patients who die each year did just that it would save Medicare a lot of

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money.

But by making living wills mandatory for Medicare patients Congress would do more than just cut costs. It would also help patients to regain control of their final days, avoid suffering, and maintain their dignity. It would cut health costs, in other words, while empowering patients rather than hurting them.

A First Step

The federal government is no stranger to the advantages of living wills. The Patient Self-Determination Act of 1990 requires health providers working with Medicare or Medicaid to ask patients whether they have living wills upon admission and, if they don't, to offer them an opportunity to execute one. But the 1990 bill didn't go far enough. Although approximately 20 percent of Medicare patients now sign living wills, there is only a small chance that anyone will take the documents seriously.

In most cases the patients' doctors never even see the living wills. Patients or their families forget to provide them; doctors and hospital staff don't ask to see them; and health care facilities, especially nursing homes, don't forward copies when patients are transferred elsewhere. One study that looked at the hospitalization of Medicare patients with previously executed living wills found that the doctors and hospital staff failed to find the living wills over 70 percent of the time, even in those cases where a living will would have directly applied because of patient incapacity.

Even when health care providers have patients' living wills in hand, they often ignore them. One patient with Alzheimer's disease used a living will to tell her New York City nursing home that she did not want any artificial nutrition or hydration while she died. Nevertheless, when she became incapacitated, the nursing home staff persistently tried to force nutrition tubes down her throat and insert the hydration IVs. To block these efforts, the agent designated by the living will was forced to sit by the woman's bedside as an around-the-clock guard until she died.

In another case, a 92-year-old concentration camp survivor in a New York hospital made her son-in-law her designated agent, told him that she had suffered enough in life, and instructed him to make sure that she would not suffer unnecessarily during her last days. After subsequent treatment for heart failure, she lost consciousness. Her kidneys and liver also failed, and her doctors put her on a dialysis machine and respirator. The son-in-law asked the doctors to remove the respirator. They replied (incorrectly) that it was against the law. He asked that they give his mother-in-law some pain medication. They refused, insisting that her blood pressure was too low and that the medication might hasten her death. Some time later, with assistance from Choice In Dying, a group that promotes living wills, the son-in-law finally persuaded the doctors to remove the respirator and give his mother-in-law pain medication. A few hours later, she died quietly with her family beside her.

As these examples show, medical personnel are often ignorant or not familiar with living wills and are therefore reluctant to depart from standard hospital practices. Most significantly, an irrational fear of malpractice claims persists—despite rulings by the Supreme Court and other federal and state courts that competent adult patients have a right to refuse treatment and demand adequate pain relief either directly or through living wills. No judgment of malpractice has ever been handed down against a doctor for following the terms of a living will or a rational patient's instructions to withhold care. And some courts have even convicted doctors of assault and battery for providing treatments against patient wishes.

How do we get the medical profession to pay more attention to living wills and follow their instructions? Simple: Congress should order the Medicare program to withhold reimbursement to doctors for care given to patients who don't have living wills or for care provided in violation of a patient's living will. Financial incentives can be very powerful.

But getting doctors to recognize and respect patients' living wills is only half the story. By promoting more frequent and in-depth doctor-patient conversations about living wills and related issues, the Medicare program could also extend the patient benefits and cost savings from living wills well beyond those situations where they directly apply. These discussions increase the chances that doctors will not only follow the living wills if they come into play but also honor the

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direct treatment instructions of dying patients who remain conscious and competent. By making doctors more aware of patients' attitudes toward different types of treatment, these discussions can also produce substantial additional savings by changing earlier treatment regimes for all patients.

Given the current situation, where doctors have been found to discuss alternatives in as few as 12 percent of patient discussions about treatments, the new doctor-patient conversations sparked by the living wills can only improve things. "Living wills provide doctors and patients with a useful starting point for discussing a variety of treatment situations," says Dr. R. Sean Morrison of the Mount Sinai Medical Center's Geriatrics Department. "That can give doctors important insights into the kind of care their patients want—both at the end of their lives and well before."

Medicare could reinforce this result by giving patients an opportunity to use their living wills to list other specific topics or treatment options they would like to discuss with their doctor—such as their attitudes toward pain and pain control, hospice care versus hospital-based treatment, and possible alternatives to surgery or other invasive procedures.

The Final Tally

Because they help patients, expanding the use of living wills would be a good idea regardless of its effect on the medical economy. But the money saved could be enormous. In a five-hospital study published in *The Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, the costs of "futile," last-minute medical care for patients with near-death diagnoses who died in the hospitals averaged about $10,400 per patient. In the final month of a patient's life, intensive care costs can surpass $100,000. And the total cost to Medicare for medical care provided to patients in their last 30 days came to roughly $20 billion in fiscal year 1995.

Many patients simply do not want or need much of the high-tech and futile care that create these final-day costs. According to a study reported in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, patients who discussed their living wills or related issues with their doctors used less intensive care, underwent fewer procedures, and experienced shorter final stays in the hospital than those without living wills. The cost of treating these patients during their final stays in the hospital was, on average, two-thirds less than the average cost for treating the other patients (roughly $30,000 versus $95,000).

Because more than a million Medicare patients die in hospitals each year, these findings suggest that the new living wills system could reduce total federal Medicare costs by about $4 billion, using 1995 figures, or roughly 2.3 percent each year. To the extent that discussions between doctors and patients about the living wills would also reduce other treatment costs, the savings would be even larger.

Using less patient-friendly means, Republicans in the House and Senate plan to cut federal Medicare funding by $270 billion over the next seven years. If the living wills strategy reduced Medicare spending by only two percent per year over the same time period, it would produce cumulative savings of almost $40 billion—or almost as much as the Republicans hope to obtain by increasing premium and deductible payments for beneficiaries with annual household incomes less than $100,000.

At the same time, the proposals outlined here can easily apply to other public and private health insurers and providers—both to help patients and reduce costs. Medicaid, which currently covers about two-thirds of all elderly persons in nursing homes and 40 percent of all AIDS patients in the United States, could benefit from a living wills strategy just like Medicare. And similar living wills systems could help the Department of Veterans Affairs health care network, U.S. military hospitals, state and city hospitals, and even private HMOs and health insurers.

Taken together, these measures would not eliminate the need for universal health care coverage or solve the problem of rising public and private health care costs. But they would eliminate a lot of unwanted and unnecessary medical care, and save billions of dollars, by empowering patients and promoting more constructive discussions between doctors and patients. They would actually improve the overall quality of health care, rather than reduce it. That sounds like a much better health care deal than most of the other ones floating around Congress these days. □

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Continuing Vacation

While doctors and lawyers hit the slopes, you foot the bill

BY ELIZABETH AUSTIN

There's a kayaking trip off the Baja peninsula, scuba diving in sunny Palau, an exhilarating climb up Tanzania's Mount Kilimanjaro, whitewater rafting in Chile, even a dog-sledding adventure in Canada's Northwest Territories.

All of these exotic vacations have one thing in common: Every year, you, the taxpayers, pay for doctors to enjoy these trips and others like them. Most doctors are required to complete credits of continuing education (CE) to help them keep abreast of the latest changes in fast-moving modern medicine—and to keep their licenses. To encourage CE, the federal government allows doctors, as well as lawyers, dentists, and numerous other professionals, to deduct expenses—including travel, food, lodging, and entertainment—from their taxes.

And so they do, with gusto. As a result, by far the most popular sites for CE are out-of-state, almost always in places associated more with fun and frolic than with the pursuit of knowledge. The classes often bear only a tenuous link to the practice of medicine. The scuba diving expedition teaches the latest in "dive medicine" to landlocked obstetricians. The kayaking and the dog-sledding trip offer "wilderness medicine" to urban practitioners.

The CE mess began with noble intentions back in the sixties, when the public began to realize that knowledge becomes outdated very quickly. A number of well-meaning state legislatures began requiring licensed professionals to take CE courses. Doctors topped the list, but other professions soon had requirements as well. The result was a bonanza for professional associations, which can draw up CE guidelines, accredit presenters (who pay a fee for the privilege), and then charge participants for each course they attend. With thousands—sometimes millions—of dollars in revenues at stake, the professional associations have little incentive to weed out worthless programs. And all too often, they don't.

Now, mandatory CE is often just an excuse for a glorified (and subsidized) vacation. A study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*

Elizabeth Austin is a Chicago writer.

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(JAMA) noted that only 27 percent of the physicians' CE hours were spent in their home communities, and 53 percent were spent out of state. In short, in the absence of careful scrutiny, continuing education for America's professionals has become not a tool for keeping vital skills sharp, but a profitable business opportunity. The American Society for Training and Development estimates the CE industry has grown to $10 billion annually, most of which is tax deductible.

There is no shortage of exotic education—nor of willing participants. The State Bar Association of Ohio, for example, demands that lawyers keep up to speed on the latest developments in the legal profession by enduring hours of CE classes. But these poor souls don't suffer through the legal implications of DNA testing in Youngstown or Dayton; far more often they're in Acapulco or Puerto Vallarta, and frequently they're barely suffering through classes at all. "If you have to spend three hours in class, why not spend the other 21 in the American Paradise?" asks the ad for a seminar held in St. Thomas for Ohio lawyers. Indeed, Ohio's bar associations are remarkably innovative when it comes to finding study sites, whether beaches or ski slopes, where most of us would not dream of cracking a book. One year the Columbus bar had to poll its members because there was a such a spirited contest between Snow Mass, Park City, and Vail as potential sites for the next round of study.

Don't think, however, that Ohio lawyers are the only pleasure-seekers. Everybody does it. Louisiana lawyers got 15 hours of continuing legal education credit, "including 1.2 hours of ethics credit," for a junket to the Hyatt Regency on Grand Cayman. The Texas Medical Association's dedicated search for sites conducive to learning discovered the Laurie River Lodge in northern Manitoba; members were assured that "you will experience full days of trophy fishing," and that "the education portion takes place in the evening after the fishing has been completed."

The Professional Insurance Agents (PIA) also found Caribbean islands conducive to learning—they held a seminar in Aruba. The announcement read: "Place yourself and your family on a large sand beach in Aruba. Enjoy heat in 85 degree sun and exposure to gentle February trade winds. Add pleasant company, casual summer clothing, PIA education seminars, shopping bargains, gambling facilities, fabulous food, and tennis courts. Shake well while you experience Aruba's night life. After drinking, deduct cost of ingredients on tax returns."

Then there's the American Association of Financial Professionals, which has used this subtle appeal: "This year take a vacation break that's also a tax break. Come to Los Angeles, Phoenix, Orlando, San Jose, Costa Rica; Panama City, Panama; Interlaken, Switzerland; or London, England with the American Association of Financial Professionals and you'll be able to write off the cost of your airfare on Eastern Airlines, your hotel bill and just about everything else but the suntan lotion. You'll also learn how to write off a lot more than your vacation. After all, you've given the IRS plenty over the years. Isn't it time they gave you something in return?"

The ads for CE events often blatantly ignore the educational content in favor of emphasizing the vacation element. Thus an Institute of Legal Studies advertisement in *California Lawyer*: "Legal Seminar in Sun Valley, Complete Packages Available Including 7 Nights Lodging, 6 Days Lift Tickets, Air Transportation, Seminar Registration." Note that there was nary a word about whether participants would be pondering contracts, torts, trusts or estates.

Even when the contents of the courses *are* explained, the burden they might place on the vacationer's schedule is minimized. Thus the Royal-Viking Star offered a 21-day China-Orient cruise and conference on Legal-Medical issues. (Note the appeal to *two* large professional groups.) During the 21 days, exactly 28 hours were supposed to be devoted to study. At the Internal Medicine and Cross-Country Skiing seminar at Yellowstone Park, all but one day's classes began after 4:00 or 4:30 p.m. and offered the solace of "hot drinks and snacks." Sometimes the real purpose of these educational endeavors is betrayed by the name, as with the Peach Bowl Federal Practice Seminar held for Iowa lawyers in Atlanta, Georgia—when

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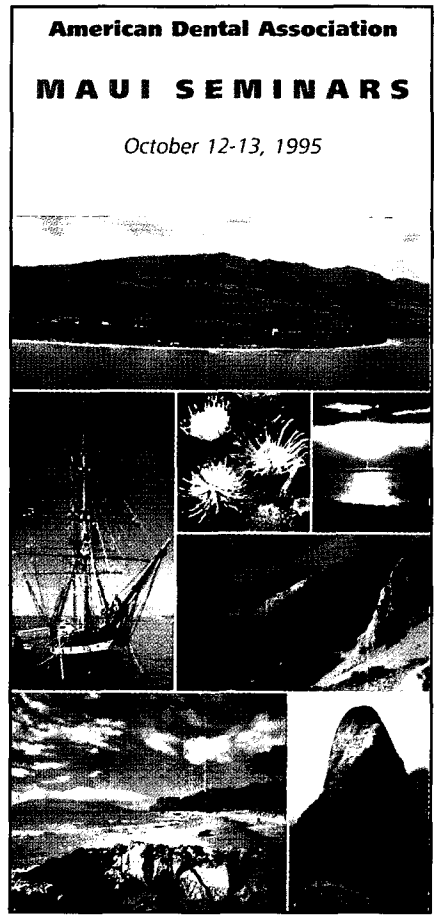
the University of Iowa was a participant in that bowl game.

CE advocates maintain that there's nothing wrong with sugar-coating the bitter education pill. "If a doctor or lawyer wants to obtain professional education in a resort-like setting, I don't think there's anything per se wrong with that," says Jim Parente, a former executive director of the Association of Continuing Legal Education Administrators.

Nothing wrong, except that the more distant and "resort-like" the setting, the bigger the tax deduction. And then there's the problem of human nature. Once you're in a "resort-like setting," it's all too easy to be tempted away from the classroom. In the terse words of the *JAMA* study: "It is often possible to pay the registration fee at the onset of a course and return at the end to receive a certificate."

Unfortunately, those who actually attend the seminars may not learn much more about helping patients. The meeting of the American Academy of Family Physicians Scientific Assembly in Boston featured CE classes such as "Contract Analysis and Negotiation: When to Hold and When to Fold," as well as a three-day forum on how "to make your practice most attractive and most successful when health plans come knocking."

Other CE classes cross the line from self-indulgent to bizarre. The doctors, nurses, dietitians, osteopaths, and counselors who attended the National Wellness Conference could get credit for attending sessions on "Honoring Your Story," a guide to "great mythical themes" in journal keeping. Then there's "Build Self-Esteem and Conquer Your Spending Personality While Power-Shopping." The Association for Humanistic Psychology, approved by the American Psychological Association, gives CE credit for "Healing Soul Loss: Shamanic Soul Revival." The Wellness Conference's Jill Pagel defends the classes: "They may need to do some learning and healing on a personal level before they have anything to offer."



It's true that touchy-feely sessions are valuable to some people. So are piano lessons. But if a medical school wouldn't give credit for "Feng Shui: Organizing the Personal Environment for Self-Empowerment," it doesn't belong on a doctor's CE syllabus either.

Critics see some of the CE classes as worse than a waste of time. Can the attendees of a Cape Cod summer symposium really master "Hypnosis in the Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder" in five three-hour sessions? "This is training people to be lousy therapists," says Clark University Professor of Psychology Joseph de Rivera.

Continuing medical education poses a particularly serious problem, because drug companies now pump an estimated $200 million into CE each year—and that quickly blurs the line between education and drug marketing. One consortium of drug companies, which included Roche Laboratories, Eli Lilly & Company, and Bristol-Myers, offered physicians $35,000 worth of office computer systems absolutely free. All the doctors had to do was dial up the computer course, answer a few questions, and their CE credits were sent like magic. There was just one catch. The doctors had to promise to view up to 32 drug advertisements on the computer screen each month, and the software allowed drug marketers to tap into the doctor's computer to review medical records (with names expunged) and track the doctor's prescribing habits. More than 1,000 enthusiastic doctors signed up.

David Jones, a former executive with Abbott

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How NEWT and his friends plan to change your life

Newt Gingrich is setting the agenda in Washington.

Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition has an even broader plan to change daily life in America.

Together they plan a revolution.

Just one item in their revolution (Newt's word) is to win election to School Boards across the country and stop the teaching of "un-Christian" ideas. Such as evolution, tolerance toward homosexuality, secular humanism and "devil worship" — that's how Robertson describes progressive ideas!

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Laboratories, told a Senate committee that his company took a more high-culture approach. To promote a tranquilizer, they treated a group of psychiatrists to a night at the opera. The singers gave a recital of great operatic episodes of psychosis and neurosis while the program listed what psychiatric condition each character might have suffered—and an ad for the appropriate tranquilizer. All the doctors received full CE credit.

CE classes are also a golden opportunity for drug companies to promote drug uses that have not been FDA-approved. A drug that has been approved for one purpose can be prescribed for another, but drug companies aren't allowed to advertise alternative uses.

To get around that barrier, drug companies sponsor seminars in which experts tout their drugs for them. Abbott Laboratories made an anti-seizure drug that they wanted doctors to prescribe for a particular type of seizure patient—even though the Food and Drug Administration refused to approve it. So Abbott treated a group of doctors to a night on Broadway, taking them to see *Night, Mother*, a play about a suicidal young woman who suffered from that type of seizure. After watching the harrowing play, the doctors received information on the drug—and full credit. Abbott also treated doctors and their wives to an all-expense-paid symposium at Disney World on how to treat women with a synthetic hormone, even though the hormone had only been approved for men with prostate cancer.

The medical establishment, unfortunately, has come to rely heavily on drug-company funding. "Physicians clearly feel their postgraduate education should be paid for by the [drug] companies," complained University of Washington Medical School Professor Dr. L. Frederick Fenster at a 1990 Senate hearing. According to Fenster, when his medical school tried to cut the strings of drug sponsorship, the well-paid doctors whined that a $150 seminar fee would be too much.

Physician, Test Thyself

As a result of Senate hearings on pharmaceutical-sponsored CE, the FDA did demand some voluntary reforms a few years ago, and there have been cutbacks in what drug companies can fund. But now there are plans afoot in Congress to cut back the FDA's authority to police drug-industry advertising. And the most obvious reform—prohibiting drug companies from funding CE courses at all—has not been enacted. As recently as last year, a *JAMA* article reported that doctors who accept drug company money to attend CE symposia are five times more likely to ask their hospitals to stock that company's drugs.

Reform in continuing education, however, needs to go beyond limiting funding by pharmaceutical companies. Professional associations, for example, mandate these courses but don't bother to check whether anyone actually learns anything. There is, of course, a time-honored way to discover whether a piece of education has taken hold. It's called a test. But "testing" is a dirty word in CE circles. Right now, in most professions, once you get your license, you are never tested again to make sure you still know what you're doing. To make sure CE lives up to its name—education—classes should end with a test.

It is also time for a policy of "no resorts." Holding a CE seminar at a golf resort sends the wrong message—that honing your skills is less important than enjoying the fruits of your labors.

Finally, in an era of budget cutting, the tax deduction has to go. *The Des Moines Register* asked an interesting question about the Peach Bowl trip: Why, assuming the lawyers were really going to Atlanta to study, should we pay for Iowa lawyers to go to Georgia to do what they could do in Iowa? Why indeed should the rest of us, through tax-deductibility, have to pay for any part of these vacations disguised as continuing education?

The lawyers, doctors, and other professionals who engage in this racket aren't bad people. They don't think of themselves as doing something wrong. They imagine themselves as somehow entitled to the taxpayer-subsidized vacations. And they think they're taking money from some faceless bureaucrat at the IRS. What they don't face is that they're taking from the real people next door, across the street, and around the country, who will be picking up the bill for their vacation. □

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The Book of Bob

Packwood's diaries are filled with steamy tidbits, but they are also a guide to what needs fixing under the Capitol dome.
A Monthly *annotation*

BY JENNIFER SHECTER

In a town of perpetual charade, Bob Packwood spent 26 years confiding his every thought—no matter how scandalous, lecherous, banal, or absurd—to a tape recorder. He turned to his diary, by ritual, every morning in his Senate office. Like a movie star sneaking a cigarette off-camera, Packwood used this time out of the public eye to record his thoughts with unsparing honesty.

Then, a wave of sexual misconduct charges rippled through the press and the halls of Congress. The Senate Ethics Committee subpoenaed Packwood's diaries, conducted an investigation, and ultimately recommended that he be expelled from the Senate. (On top of the original allegations, Packwood's attempt to alter some diary entries played a major role in the committee's decision.)

The public now has full access to these diaries, published in two thick volumes by the Government Printing Office. Although much of the media coverage has focused on Packwood's sexual peccadilloes—such as a hilarious moment when Packwood is so engrossed by a woman's skill at bridge that he can "hardly concentrate on [her] breasts"—the diaries tell other, more important stories: how money, friendships, and politics mix in Washington to produce policy; how politicians openly skirt campaign finance laws and abuse their power for personal gain; how even the most powerful can be desperately insecure.

These diaries highlight some of the windmills *The Washington Monthly* has been tilting at for more than two decades. It is as clear as ever that the serious flaws in our political process require immediate attention—a lesson that is particularly relevant now, as the House GOP leadership has pushed back campaign finance reform until next year.

The following excerpts, reprinted in their original version and chronological order, offer a rare glimpse behind the scenes into how the nation's capital really works and explain why, so often, it doesn't work. Except for explanatory notes and a few comments, we have left Packwood's words to speak for themselves—and for the state of the capital's institutions. The punctuation and spelling reflect that used by the Ethics Committee.

Jennifer Shecter is an intern at The Washington Monthly.

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The Packwood Diaries

June 19, 1989: *Ron Crawford has been a close friend of Packwood's for many years. He is also a lobbyist for influential companies such as Shell Oil and for the American Iron and Steel Institute.*

June 19, 1989: The American Iron and Steel Institute was in to lobby me for an extension of the voluntary restraints on steel. I let them in because Ron Crawford now represents them. Boy, if this isn't a group of overweight, stand pat, white, past middle age pedestrian men, I've never seen it. No wonder the steel industry is in bad shape.

November 9, 1989: *Packwood is referring to friend and owner of Greenbrier, Bill Furman, and to Tim Lee, a former intern on Packwood's staff and founder of a trucking brokerage. Both men agreed to help the senator keep his alimony payments to Georgie, his wife of 27 years, to a minimum.*

November 9, 1989: Mike Kelly and I got to the Bill Furman breakfast. It was Furman, [Name Deleted], the former ICC Chairman or at least commissioner, Jim Beale, the lobbyist for Greenbrier, somebody from Westinghouse Credit Corporation, and a sixth person. And it was nothing but to thank me for what I had done on Trailer Train (?) and the investment tax credit—whatever it was I got for them in the tax reform bill—and of course Furman has said he'll join Tim Lee in helping keep Georgie solvent. It was a particularly delightful breakfast. Back to the office about 9:15.

January 18, 1990: *"Cliff" is Clifford Alexander, a liberal Democrat and the first black Secretary of the Army. He became a lobbyist and the pragmatic nature of his relationship with the Republican Packwood is clear here. Friendship yielded to self-interest when Packwood asked him for a personal favor that Alexander thought would not only hurt his client—the Investment Company Institute (ICI)—but might tarnish his image as well. Packwood's reaction reflects the insecurity that plagues even the most powerful of Washington's elite.*

January 18, 1990: A quick lunch with Cliff. It was a nice friendly lunch. He said, "Is there anything I can do?" I hit him up to give a job to Georgie, but he said, "Gosh, we've got that ICI client. It wouldn't look good." I said, "It doesn't matter if we're separated." Well, Cliff said ... and this was after he was bragging about all the money he had, how much they're making, how much he's setting aside, what kind of trust he has for the kids and that he needs to work five more years until he can retire comfortably on his investments and income for the rest of his life, but not enough money for Georgie. It's funny. I hit [Name Deleted] up. He says 'Yes.' [Name Deleted] a close friend but not as close as Cliff. The same with Saunders, same with Ron. They just say bang, bang, bang—yes. But not Cliff. That means next week I've got to turn to Saunders and then to Crawford.

August 3, 1990: [One staff member] handles all the things I don't like. All the social welfare stuff, the education, the handicapped, the blind, all those things that I have so little patience for and all those programs that I think probably are a waste of money....

August 27, 1990: *Following a Washington tradition of retiring into the lucrative private sector, Packwood dreamt of working with the regional Bell companies—companies he tried to assist during his tenure as chair of the Senate Communications Subcommittee. His efforts did not go unnoticed: Debra Friedman, Bell Atlantic Mobile's regional marketing director, donated $2,000 to his legal defense trust fund.*

August 27, 1990: I don't know if I want to go through it and lose, barren of my reputation, barren of money, or go out like Rocky Graziano, having two or three million dollars in this kitty and if no campaign reform is passed I can transfer it to some other kitty. I can become a lobbyist at five or six or four hundred thousand ... What I would like to do is get the Baby Bells to form their own telephone association, breaking away from the United States Telephone Association, maybe bringing GTE in with them, and then organizing lobbying at the grass roots like has not been seen in a telephone association before....

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May 31, 1991: At 3:00 met with Bill Furman and a tall guy from Itell in San Francisco, a company that has 70,000 railroad cars that they lease. I can't remember his name. A good-looking guy. Basically this is the argument: they want to keep long trucks off the highways. They want to keep twin-doubles, the two 48-foot ones and the triples off the highways whenever they can. The thing I liked about Furman was that the approach that he made was purely one of economics. He said, "I know the polls show safety but I'm not sure safety is as tellingly proved as people are fearful."... Well, I've often said I like the approach when somebody comes to me and says 'we don't like this because it's adverse to our interests.'

May 31, 1991: This goes to show that in Washington, right is sometimes done for the wrong reasons. The large vehicles discussed in this entry cause many fatalities—in addition to tearing up the public highways—and keeping them off the road is a public service.

November 13, 1991: ... The people at the function had little green dots or red dots on their tags which meant they had given money to me in the campaign and had either come to the Portland breakfast or had given in some other way. Another of Bill Furman's ways of helping identify people.

March 6, 1992: [Name Deleted] and I and Elaine and Senator X—and the guy travelling with Senator X, met for just 10 or 15 minutes. Senator X again promised $100,000 for Party-building activities.

And what was said in that room would be enough to convict us all of something. He says, now, of course you know there can't be any legal connection between this money and Senator Packwood, but we know that it will be used for his benefit. [Name Deleted] said, oh, yes.

God, there's Elaine and I sitting there. I think that's a felony, I'm not sure. This is an area of the law I don't want to know.

March 6, 1992: Senator X, later identified as Phil Gramm, apparently promised Packwood $100,000 for use in his campaign, even though this violates the rules on "soft money"—money which is not governed by federal donation limits, and which is supposed to be used only for state or local "party-building" activities, not to support particular federal candidates like Packwood. The funds were transferred with the knowledge of Packwood, and his chief of staff, Elaine Franklin, from the National Republican Senatorial Committee to the Oregon Republican party in time for Packwood's re-election bid against Les AuCoin.

March 23, 1992: Elaine has been talking to me privately about independent expenditures. Apparently the Auto Dealers are willing to do some spending against [Les AuCoin]. Of course we can't know anything about it. [Name Deleted]'s going to do it. We've got to destroy any evidence we've ever had ... so that we have no connection with any independent expenditure. Elaine says that Tim Lee is also willing to do an independent expenditure, but I don't know how we've ever given the impression we have of no connection to him.

March 23, 1992: In his efforts to circumvent campaign finance laws, Packwood manipulated the use of independent expenditures—money spent supporting a campaign that the candidate supposedly has no knowledge of and has not solicited. Packwood violated Federal Election Commission (FEC) regulations by requesting the favor from the Auto Dealers. Former Packwood employee Tim Lee also violated FEC rules, as former employees are not allowed to make independent expenditures.

September 30, 1992: [Name Deleted] was in with [Name Deleted]. He runs a publishing house in Alexandria. He has 220 employees and what they publish are forms to tell Medicare providers how to comply with the law. He gave me $1,000. That's worth 10 minutes.

October 4, 1992: ... By and large, everything I want is in this tax bill: the Reforestation Trust Fund; the Drift Nets; the Custom Gun Smiths; everything we need—although I don't think we need

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the custom gun smiths' deal now, not to get the NRA's help, not as long as I was able to vote against cloture on the Crime Bill. We should have them sewed up. They should do a general mailing to their membership, and a get-out-the-vote mailing.

October 6, 1992: Although the NRA only officially gave $2,000 to Packwood's PAC in 1992, the gun lobby spent $22,613 on the mailing being examined in this entry. Despite the contribution being registered as an independent expenditure, it is clear from this excerpt that Packwood solicited the NRA's cooperation.

October 6, 1992: Came back to the office and met with [Name Deleted] from the National Rifle Association ... He showed me the piece the National Rifle Association is going to send out hitting [Les AuCoin]. God, is it tough! It starts right out: Vote to toss out [Les AuCoin] and vote for Senator Bob Packwood. Toss out of Congress someone who believes he made a mistake when he supported your Second Amendment Right. Vote to toss out [Les AuCoin]....

I cannot tell you how tough it is. They are going to send it to 90,000 members. And, he said if he has enough money he's going to send it out to 100,000 Oregon gun owners, or something like that. Now the question is: Are they going to do a second mailing just before the postcard about "get out and vote."

God, things are going in the right direction today....

March 27, 1993: Since the late 1970s, members of Congress have been allowed to solicit money for their legal defense. By the time Packwood went before the Ethics Committee, he had raised $636,000 through donations from over 1,200 sources including: Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America ($500); William Gradison, former GOP congressman and president of Health Insurance Association of America ($2,000); Dwayne Andreas, Archer Daniels Midland CEO ($5,000); and Senator Robert Bennett (R-Utah) ($10,000). Contributors did not donate to Packwood's fund just out of the goodness of their hearts. They had a vested interested in keeping Packwood in a position to influence legislation on the powerful Senate Finance Committee and elsewhere. One might wonder: Why would a fellow senator give Packwood money? Simple: Like private lobbyists, congressmen want to be able to count on certain members' votes on important bills.

March 27, 1993: Breakfast with some of the Oregon home builders ... We chatted for a while about some of the things we wanted, and then I got into my complaints with the National Home Builders. The Oregon home builders all said they were mad. They felt they'd been double-crossed, and I said the home builders could make it up with me with a contribution of $10,000 for my legal defense trust fund.

April 21 1993: ... [Name Deleted] is now representing the Seafarers and the National Lumber Wholesalers....

Well, I had called [Name Deleted] the other day and said, didn't the Seafarers, SPAD being their political action committee, give $10,000 to [Name Deleted]?

No, $5,000, he said. And that was for the primary.

Well, I had the figures. They gave $5,000 in September 1991, and $5,000 in June 1992....

[Name Deleted] called me back, shame-faced. He said, Bob, there's been a total confusion. I'd like to bring [Name Deleted] in to explain it to you—[Name Deleted] being their political director....

A new president has come in and confusion ran rampant....

They gave $5,000 bucks to [Name Deleted] against [Name Deleted]. Then the local guy of the Seafarers called and [Name Deleted] gave another $5,000. Then they weren't keeping good books, and all that.

Well, I'm not sure that's the story but I've been good to the Seafarers....

So he wanted to bring the guy in to apologize. He did, and he said, Senator, what can we do to make it up to you?

I said, You could give $10,000 to my legal defense fund.

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He said, How do we do it?

I said, PACs can give. It's a gift. It's legal.

He says, Tell me who to make the check out to and you'll have it tomorrow....

May 28, 1993: [Names Deleted] from the ATA were in. I said I think we can beat the whole package ... He says what kind of taxes [will be in the package]? And I said the taxes on the rich will be there. He says what about an energy tax? I said I don't think so. I said we may finally move toward a consumption tax. I hope it's not a value added tax, but I think we'll start to move toward one.

I then hit him up for some money for my legal defense trust fund. He said send me the information. I'll be happy to help.

May 28, 1993: Packwood is presumably referring to the American Trucking Association in this excerpt.

June 14, 1993: At 2:45, [Name Deleted] was in, just to talk about making permanent the low-income tax credit. He, of course, had promised to do something on the legal expense trust fund. He has performed nothing yet.

Back to the office. 6:15, [Name Deleted], the lobbyist for the Laborers Union, came in, gave me a $10,000 check for the legal expense trust fund. Nothing was said, of course, about striker replacement.

June 14, 1993: "Striker replacement" refers to a bill that would have allowed employers to hire permanent replacements for striking workers. The Senate bill, S55, prohibiting striker replacement was blocked by Republicans, including Packwood, last year.

June 16, 1993: [Name Deleted] and [Name Deleted]. He works with the Kansas City Southern Railway. Brought in a $1,500 check for the legal defense fund. He used to work for WPPS, Washington Public Power System. And I chatted with them about 15 minutes about how WPPS got into the problems that it had.

July 28, 1993: ... he said, have you seen the articles in the Dallas paper on [Name Deleted]'s use of his office for politics? I said, no. He said, well, they've got memos from staff, and it's clear use of his office for political purposes.

I tucked that away in my mind. I've got a copy of it. ... And I came back, told the Wednesday Club of the [Name Deleted] possible indictment. And I said, any memos you got, any papers you got, anything you can destroy ... if it really points to anything involving politics in the office....

July 28, 1993: Packwood regularly attended the Wednesday Club—a weekly lunch open to all Senate Republicans to discuss their mutual concerns. In this case, the concern was congressmen's use of their offices for political purposes—an egregious violation of the law that nearly cost Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson her political career.

Bonus: What's Next For Packwood?

January 4, 1993: Well, I'll say again, if worse comes to worst, if they don't expel me. They can strip me of my seniority, they can punish me, they can make me pay money to the Senate, which I can pay for out of my campaign funds, except I'd hoped to use that to set up a historical trust, I may be reduced in six years to my pension and Social Security, and on that, I will live quite happily.

January 4, 1993: Packwood should "live quite happily" on the $88,922 annual pension he will start receiving immediately. He would have been entitled to this benefit even if he had been officially expelled from the Senate. Congressional pensions are only suspended if members of Congress are convicted of a crime.

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Class, Not Race

The Washington Post's *racial politics are making national headlines. What about that paper's—and the rest of the media's—neglect of the working class?*

BY AMY WALDMAN

"His investigations often turned on the misuse of money, but since he had become rich himself, he discovered that money was more subtle than it had seemed when he was poor."

–Ward Just, *Jack Gance*

"Now all my friends are rich. Curiously, they want me to be rich, too," wrote James Glassman, fresh to Washington, in a 1980 *New Republic* article called "Prisoners of Real Estate." He had missed the boat, he said, by not buying a house in the seventies, while his contemporaries—"the ones who railed against the Vietnam War and big business and private property in the 1960s"—profited from the housing run-up. Still, he mocked those friends as part of a real estate class "obsessed with money," with "no use for drug clinics in the neighborhood, for property taxes, for quaint bars or the trappings of progress. They climb on board and pull up the ladder."

"I guess there's a sort of irony there," says Glassman of that article today. Indeed there is. For Glassman is now not only a homeowner, but he is rich, very rich, having sold off a healthy stake in the congressional newspaper *Roll Call* and become a guru to the investing class. His hair has grayed; he wears sharp suits. He hosts two TV shows. He writes a personal finance column for *The Washington Post* and, since March, a weekly op-ed column as well—a column in which he often proselytizes for "pulling up the ladder," whether discouraging an increase in the minimum wage or lambasting the Earned Income Tax Credit, which benefits the working poor. Glassman is the market's cheerleader, and he is very much in vogue in Dick Armey's Washington.

Twenty-five years ago, Glassman favored a different sort of radical chic—that of the left. When he graduated from Harvard in 1969, anti-war fury and civil-rights agitation were consuming the campus. He wore a motorcycle jacket; he protested the Vietnam War; he railed against corporations. "They wanted to tear the establishment down," recalls Patrick R. Sorrento, production supervisor for the last 28 years at *The Harvard Crimson*, where Glassman was managing editor. "And Jim was right in the thick of it."

In a recent *New Republic* story on affirmative ac-

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tion at the *Post*, Ruth Shalit asserted that the paper's top figures are fuzzy liberals whose sensitivity about race is compromising "the paper's traditional role as a gadfly." On questions of race, Shalit may have a point. But on economic issues the *Post* is far from a gadfly—because it's *not* liberal.

Something of the way the *Post* approaches these issues can be understood by looking at the background and views of the individuals who cover them—people like Glassman and his peers. He and several of his *Crimson* compatriots—economic columnist Robert Samuelson ('67), financial correspondent Jay Mathews ('67), and assistant managing editor for financial news David Ignatius ('72)—play critical roles in the way one of the country's most important papers covers some of the most important subjects: the economy and business.

Their personal stories are part of a broader phenomenon. They reflect the transformation of journalism from a craft into a well-paid profession. They were born into the middle class or higher and attended fine colleges. They have reaped the bounty of an age of media affluence. They also happen to work for a wealthy company, and in a newspaper business that has suffered an attrition in readership over the past two decades among lower-income readers.

Their individual arcs show how a paper can lose touch with the average worker: Its journalists lead ever-more comfortable lives, with minimal contact with less fortunate counterparts, even as they succumb to the subtle pressures of their employer's own corporate self-interest. Where many of the children of the sixties once burned to challenge the status quo, today they are complacent, even cynical. The idealists and radicals who thought they could change the world grew up and changed their minds instead.

Post-Naderism

After graduating from Harvard, David Ignatius wrote a story for the *Monthly* in 1973 in which he attacked the dean of Harvard Medical School for serving as a consultant to the pharmaceutical manufacturers, E.R. Squibb and Sons, and helping the company get Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval for a controversial drug. (Ignatius was an editor at the *Monthly* in the mid-1970s.)

As a college student, Ignatius—bearded, long-haired, and passionately anti-war—had worked for consumer advocate Ralph Nader, who remembers him as "a firebrand." Today, as a top editor at the *Post*, the well-groomed Ignatius is no longer a radical reformer. "I'm not embarassed to have worked for Nader," Ignatius now insists, although I hadn't asked if he was. Nader, in turn, is frequently critical of his former employee's business section, which he feels lacks a commitment to covering the hazards of the marketplace.

Stories like the one Ignatius did on Squibb aren't likely to make the business section today. "I'm often amazed how significant wrongdoing by corporations is not always treated as a page-one story," says Howard Kurtz, the *Post*'s media critic. Once, the perception in the newsroom was that business "must be doing something bad," explains business reporter Steven Pearlstein. "Now," he says, "we don't assume that." The *Post* prides itself on its vigilant coverage of government and politicians, but its scrutiny of the private sector is less impressive. Take a few recent examples, all from August 1995:

• DuPont Co. was fined $115 million for concealing evidence in a 1993 trial over one of its fungicides. "Put in layperson's terms," the judge wrote, "DuPont cheated. And it cheated consciously, deliberately and with purpose." Both *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* ran stories as the news broke, quoting the judge. The *Post* delayed the story a day, then buried it as a 53-word story in "Business Digest," a round-up of brief also-rans for business news. The brief did not quote the judge but did include the company response that the decision was "unreasonable."

• When Maytag agreed to pay $16.5 million to almost 800 workers for breaking a promise to not close a plant about 50 miles from the District, the *Post* gave it 49 words in "Business Digest." Ignatius defended the DuPont decision on the grounds that it wasn't a local story, but as the Maytag example shows, even local stories that reflect critically on corporations can get short shrift.

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• After one of the largest FDA health care investigations in history, three former executives of C.R. Bard Inc. were convicted in U.S. District Court of criminal charges for concealing information about the use of faulty heart catheters in coronary surgery. The *Journal* ran a full story about the conviction, noting that the company had willfully ignored health and safety laws in an effort to raise profits. The *Post* buried the story as the fourth item in "Business Digest."

• Late in the month, when federal officials raided California sweatshops, where illegal Asian immigrants were working in slave-like conditions, and linked the sweatshops to organized crime, the *Times* ran a front-page story. The *Post* reported it as the ninth item in Business Digest. According to Executive Editor Leonard Downie, the *Post* uses its front page to tell readers what is important. Is that why a story about Roy Rogers introducing bagels on its menu made the front page?

It wasn't always this way. For two decades, the *Post* had a crusading reporter named Morton Mintz, who led a consumer jihad against morally-challenged companies. Mintz wrote lengthy investigative pieces not just on the lapses of drug, tobacco, or car companies, but on "where the legal and moral obligations of corporations begin and end," as he wrote in one story, and on whether regulatory agencies like the FDA and the Securities and Exchange Commission were doing their job to protect the public. On something like the DuPont fine, Mintz would have delivered a 2,000-word piece examining who lied, about what, and who it hurt.

But sometime in the mid-1980s, perhaps due to the growing political power of business in the Reagan years, such vigorous consumer and corporate investigations began to go out of fashion. Mintz retired in 1988, and no one has picked up his gauntlet. Under Ignatius, there has been some groundbreaking investigative work, such as a series that exposed the highly profitable Fannie Mae's tax-exempt deal with the District of Columbia. But much more of the business coverage serves as a press release-based bulletin board for company profits, mergers, and personnel moves.

The business section, Ignatius explains, now defines "consumers" as investors looking for advice in compounding and safeguarding their money. "Our area is so prosperous," he says. "We have so many two-income families, and they do have time to think about mutual funds, college, what to do with their money." A promotional kit for would-be *Post* advertisers notes readers' $53,435 average annual household income after taxes, and that the D.C. area is rated above the national norm in ownership of European luxury cars, stocks, securities, and investment property. To lure these readers, and the advertisers they attract, the *Post* has considerably expanded personal finance coverage. This is a national media trend, and guiding the increasing number of Americans with money in stocks and mutual funds is a public service. Ignatius points with justifiable pride to a recent front-page story exposing how brokers gunning for commissions give investors bad advice.

But to define "consumer" so narrowly leaves the many people who may never have large quantities of money to invest, but who do worry about their health, their ability to get insurance, or the safety of their cars, without a paper speaking to their needs. As Richard Harwood, a former *Post* editor and ombudsman, noted in the paper several years ago, which ballet to see, which restaurant to sample, which Lexus gets the best mileage to the gallon, all get covered, but "consumer news involving ripoffs, commercial fraud, product safety and the like has tended to fall between the cracks."

In light of the ferocious battles around regulatory reform, the business section did add a weekly column called "The Regulators." But the column rarely takes a tough look at where regulation is important and useful to protect workers, consumers, or the environment, or where it's truly frivolous or burdensome, as business so often claims. Instead, it is a melange of gossip about agencies and industries, and "business said/the FDA said" back-and-forth over regulations—on items like underwear and condoms—that make for cute copy.

The neglect of issues important to many Americans extends to broader economic coverage as well. "The *Times* has devoted much more attention to child poverty, changes in wealth and income distribution, wage distribution," says Gary Burtless, a Brookings Institution economist. "These are some of the most important issues affecting American political and economic life. I don't know why it hasn't received the same coverage in the *Post*." The *Post* has done several good stories on stagnating wages, and a front-page story on how GOP tax cuts could exacerbate the income gap. But they have given insufficient attention to the fundamental transformation in American life: The rich are

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getting richer, the poor are getting poorer, and the middle class is disappearing.

In April, for example, the *Times* reported a new study by economist Edward Wolff documenting the growing inequality of wealth between the very rich and the rest of America. That study provoked a volcanic conservative reaction. Much of the vitriol wasn't due to the report's substance, but to the the *Times*'s decision to put it on the front page—which made it impossible to ignore. Though the *Post* ran op-ed pieces, mostly attacking Wolff's study, the paper's readers would have been hard-pressed to find any mention of the study on the news pages. For Washington's leading daily and arguably the paper of record for policymakers in the nation's capital, the omission was peculiar.

"I'm often amazed how significant wrongdoing by corporations is not always treated as a page-one story," says *Post* media critic Howard Kurtz.

Ignatius acknowledges that the paper is grappling with how to better cover the effects of economic shifts on "ordinary people." But too often, the *Post* forgets them, as it did in the coverage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). One study by Fairness and Accuracy in Media found that *Post* news coverage from April to July of 1993, when the debate was reaching its height, didn't quote a single member of the general public. The consensus in the Washington policy establishment was largely that NAFTA was positive, and therefore discontent from the heartland was minimized."Most journalists don't hobnob with the sort of people who might lose their jobs under a trade agreement," explains Kurtz. "So there wasn't the kind of emotional connection that you see when newspaper people are laid off."

NAFTA was a close call, but the *Post*, like the rest of the mainstream press, portrayed it as a slam dunk. Now, Ignatius expresses mixed feelings on NAFTA: Though he became convinced of the virtues of free trade while covering what was then a heavily protected steel industry in the seventies, he is troubled by "the plight of the bottom two-fifths who won't thrive because of lower skills." Yet such ambivalence was only minimally reflected in the coverage. The FAIR study found that 71 percent of quoted sources in NAFTA stories in the *Post* were pro-NAFTA; only 17 percent were opposed. (The *Times* was only slightly better; their ratio was 66 to 24 percent.) The imbalance in news coverage was exacerbated by the relentless pro-NAFTA drumbeat on the *Post*'s op-ed page, which in 1993 ran approximately 48 pieces in favor of the treaty, and only eight against. Nor has there been much subsequent coverage of whether the gains for workers the treaty's proponents promised have materialized.

The *Post* has been particularly remiss in examining the effects of major corporate moves on workers and consumers. Take the merger between Citicorp and Chemical Bank, the lead front-page story on August 29 in both the *Times* and *Post*. In the headline, the *Times* reported that 12,000 jobs would be lost, and ran a separate story on how the merger could reduce bank service in poor neighborhoods. The *Post* only mentioned the job loss in the seventh paragraph; a possible reduction in service was raised only to report a bank official's denial that service would be affected. The *Times* and the *Post* also ran front-page stories, on September 21, on the breakup of AT&T. Again, the *Times* indicated in the headline that 8,500 jobs would go; the *Post* mentioned it in the seventeenth paragraph. Ignatius defends the *Post*'s news judgement on the grounds that these weren't local stories. But if DuPont's malfeasance didn't get covered because it wasn't local, why did these non-local mergers make page one? And since the story did make the front-page, why give such short shrift to the potential losers in the deals?

On the whole, of course, the *Post* isn't unique in looking at mergers through a Wall Street prism. "There's an unfortunate tendency in the media to do upbeat stories about which huge corporation is swallowing another huge corporation and, by the way, 10,000 people will lose their jobs," Kurtz says. "There's a tendency to go to experts and analysts who applaud layoffs because stocks go up."

Such coverage doesn't result from callousness. Jay Mathews, who wrote the Citicorp story, says it's important to him to cover the human and social costs of such mergers. But journalists like Mathews are inured to the impact of the financial moves they cover on average Americans. Job insecurity isn't an issue for Mathews; his friends are more

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likely to be other journalists than bank tellers; there is probably no shortage of bank branches where he lives. That, combined with the pressure to conform to the conventional financial reporting Kurtz describes, makes such effects seem abstract.

Mathews is another Harvard alumnus, and like quite a few of his *Post* colleagues, a one-time liberal. "It was a radical era," he says of his Cambridge days. "We thought we were going to be running the country one day ... We were all Government majors, interested in how government could change things. The New Deal, the GI Bill, the post-war success, all were very influential. Now we see how that weakened the social fabric."

But Mathews also concedes that financial upward mobility has influenced his own—and his colleagues'—views: "I don't think you can rule out personal interest; we're a lot more comfortable financially than we were then ... I'm in a two-career marriage, much better off than my parents were. It's true for most members of my generation who've had the educational advantages we've had." Does Mathews's conservatism influence his news judgment? "Absolutely," he says. So does his class. He has, for example, written articles, and is writing a book, expressing concern about how the movement to equalize education funds among richer and poorer school districts is impacting well-off districts. He describes parents in wealthy districts, parents much like himself, as "cornered" and "under the gun financially." Through his journalism, the personal becomes the public, and the personal is heavily slanted toward the upper class.

Exit, Left

There's another reason that the paper's reporters and editors might not approach big business with skepticism: They work for a big business. The Post Company's revenues totaled nearly $1.2 billion in 1994; it owns *Newsweek* magazine, six television stations, and more than 50 cable systems, including Post-Newsweek Cable. The *Post* provides a snapshot of the tensions between corporate ownership of a newspaper and coverage of business and the economy—coverage that can have a direct impact on that corporation's shares, its advertisers, and public policy that will affect its holdings.

This tension flared up during debate over the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) recently approved by Congress. While the paper was editorializing in favor of GATT, it was revealed that a Post Co. subsidiary stood to save millions if the treaty became law. It was an illuminating moment, as was Don Graham's concession that he had lobbied Congress and the administration for the provision. "We had no choice but to lobby and assert our interests," Graham says.

This year, Post-Newsweek Cable stands to benefit from Republican-sponsored telecommunications legislation that would allow them to raise cable rates, and the Post Co.'s TV stations could benefit from a provision to give away broadcast frequencies for free. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) wants to auction the frequencies because to do so could bring the government $37 billion. Even the conservative *Journal* editorial page has railed against this "GOP Giveaway," but the *Post*'s editorial page has been conspicuously silent. "There is a dangerous line for the *Post* to handle—the relationship between the paper as a fine journalistic enterprise and the *Post* as a large business and part of the business community," says Juan Williams, a *Post* reporter for 19 years.

Indeed, some *Post* editorial decisions seem to be playing to a corporate peanut gallery. A front-page story on July 30 was headlined "Federal Rules Carry Weighty Responsibility; In Texas, Diaper Company Bears Burden of Compliance." The jump headline, spread across two-thirds of a page, read "Company Confronts a Mountain of Regulatory Paperwork." But the story said that the company's environmental and worker safety requirements were minimal—contrary to the rhetoric on Capitol Hill. And what the *Post* called the company's financial regulatory burden resulted largely from their decision to sell $75 million worth of junk bonds, and their violation of patent law. Jay Mathews, who wrote the story, says he was surprised because his conclusions ran counter to conventional conservative wisdom. You never would have guessed that from the headline, or the first seven paragraphs. A story that undermined GOP attacks on environmental and worker protections was instead spun to suggest that regulation is overly burdensome—and it ran the day before congressional debate on regulatory roll-back began.

The Graham family serves the dual role of corporate chieftains and editorial supervisors. And while they could be expected to pay close attention to the bottom line, neither Donald Graham, nor his mother Katharine before him, has ever dictated

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coverage to the editorial side. But it's natural that employees try to please him, especially when he has known some of those employees, such as Samuelson and Mathews, since their days at the *Crimson*, where they worked together. Don Graham, who succeeded his mother as publisher in 1979 and CEO in 1991, has had more exposure to people of less privileged backgrounds than most of his Harvard classmates—he went to Vietnam and worked as a police officer in Washington, D.C.—but he is now running a major corporation. That means that he's more likely to lean toward, say, regulatory or taxation policies that favor businesses' bottom line rather than workers' interests. He says the paper's editorial pages reflect his politics, and on economic issues in particular, those pages are increasingly conservative.

The business section now defines "consumers" as investors looking for advice in compounding and safeguarding their money.

The op-ed page's tone—relentlessly centrist, moderate, and homogenous, what *George* magazine calls "post-partisan"—also reflects the thinking of Meg Greenfield, the editorial page editor. Her columns are largely confined to musings on the incivility of political and social discourse; with rare exception, she does not trumpet the cause of the down-and-out. And with the death of liberal Hobart Rowen last April, economic writing on the op-ed page has been dominated by the voices of two regular columnists, Robert Samuelson and James Glassman.

Samuelson, whose column also appears in *Newsweek*, graduated from Harvard in 1967 with a reputation as a juggernaut of reporting skill and brain power, which has followed him into his career as a columnist. Samuelson has exhibited a remarkable consistency of ideas since his college years. Unlike many of his classmates, who were caught up in the ferment of the war and the civil rights movement, Samuelson was not political; he was then, as he remains, interested in figuring out how things work, not what to do about them.

This interest was reinforced by one of his college professors, whom Samuelson calls the "best teacher I ever had," a political scientist named Edward Banfield. "I can't overemphasize his importance as an influence on [Samuelson]," says Jay Mathews. Banfield achieved notoriety—and laid the groundwork for people like Charles Murray—by challenging liberal doctrine on the underclass, arguing that a pathology permeated the culture of poverty, and that government could not ameliorate poverty.

From Banfield, Samuelson took several principles that have shaped his writing on the economy and society: that the role of government must be narrowly defined according to the American political tradition, that the American poor are relatively well-off compared to those in other countries, or the poor in the past, and most of all, that "all problems do not have solutions." That notion, combined with Samuelson's fervent rejection of Keynesian economics and the belief that booms and busts in the business cycle cannot be eliminated, has produced what can only be called an economic fatalism: No matter how bad things are, they really cannot be any other way.

"The glory of [Samuelson's] column," says Don Graham, defending his editorial page's economic slant, "is that he's very unpredictable." But others disagree. Independently of each other, two prominent Washington journalists called Samuelson the modern incarnation of Voltaire's Dr. Pangloss. "The best of possible worlds" was Pangloss's constant refrain as plagues and wars raged around him. Nothing better captures the essence of Samuelson's philosophy and writing than the notion that this is, indeed, the best of all possible worlds. "It would have been nice if whatever is going on out there had produced a different result," he says of growing inequality, "but it didn't."

For well-off readers, Samuelson provides this reassurance: Economic have-nots are the inevitable, if unfortunate, result of a market economy. And lest his readers feel pangs of guilt, Samuelson musters statistics to show that the very poorest are slightly less happy, the richest slightly more happy, but otherwise income makes little difference in happiness. Americans, Samuelson believes, simply need to stop whining about their economic plight. "The paradox of our time is that Americans are feeling bad about doing well," he writes in his forthcoming book *The Good Life and Its Discontents: The American Dream in the Age of Entitlement, 1945-1995*. He argues that Ameri-

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can unhappiness largely stems from unrealistic expectations, a sense of personal and financial entitlement. Samuelson is right to an extent: Rising expectations are a social problem in the United States and elsewhere. But that does not account for all of the country's angst, nor should it provide an excuse for the comfortable to avoid addressing the problems of those who aren't.

Like many journalists and policymakers, Samuelson is more concerned with the macroeconomy, and its long-term development, than with its immediate impact on Americans. That's understandable: Washington is a policy town, not a factory town. Samuelson, like many prominent journalists, earns a six-figure income. He works in a tiny cluttered office 12 floors above Washington. Except for what he finds in the news pages, he has little exposure to those who have no health care or have lost their jobs due to what he sees as healthy corporate competition. Samuelson does extensive reporting for his columns, but that reporting is largely confined to analysts, economists, and business owners.

Nowhere does this narrow view of the economy manifest itself more clearly than in Samuelson's obsession with preventing inflation. Over the past several years, he has urged the Federal Reserve Board to stave off always-impending inflation with hikes in interest rates that inevitably slow economic growth and job creation. The theory is that if unemployment is too low, workers will be in short supply and, therefore, they will be encouraged to demand higher wages. But the labor force that Samuelson is so sure is going to demand higher wages—and therefore put inflationary pressure on the whole economy—is in fact remarkably docile, as a result of global competition, the insecurity of new volatile markets, and trends such as the increasing number of part-time and temporary workers and the decline of unions. Operating from inflationary premises developed during the seventies, Samuelson seems unwilling to open his eyes and acknowledge that the balance of economic power has shifted away from labor.

On inflation, Samuelson's prescription is Federal Reserve Board intervention. But when it comes to the plight of the struggling, Samuelson does not discuss solutions—unless to dismiss them. He calls taxing the rich "punitive," argues that all federal job training programs ought to be scrapped because he doesn't think they've worked, and vociferously has opposed both the Clinton health care plan and the principle of universal coverage.

To his credit, Samuelson did attack Republican plans to cut the Earned Income Tax Credit; he calls the GOP effort "morally offensive." And in person, he seems much more compassionate, more doubting, than the harsh certitude his writing often conveys. "We have three kids, a good income," he says. "My wife is a wonderful mother. And it's hard work. I think about someone who's 19, has no partner, no permanent job, not even a high school education, and two kids, and I despair at how difficult it is for her."

But in print, Samuelson, like most pundits, sticks to his guns. As concern has mounted over the failure of wages to keep pace with productivity, for example, Samuelson has taken several unique tacks: For years, he denied that incomes were stagnating. When even his own newspaper reported otherwise, Samuelson finally reversed course and conceded that wages are indeed stagnating, but he insisted that living standards must inevitably rise, and in fact already are—it's just that the increases are "hidden." In other words, don't worry about declining standards of living because they're not really declining at all.

"Bunk," as Samuelson himself frequently writes. In any corner of America, you'll hear families complain that they are working harder, but earning less, running faster than ever, but still falling behind. But people listen to what Samuelson thinks—including his colleagues who write the news. Steven Pearlstein, for example, was dismissive of the Wolff inequality study partly because Samuelson (and James Glassman) attacked it on the op-ed page. Jay Mathews says he gave up long ago trying to figure out the economy: "I just listen to what [Samuelson] thinks." Mathews was relieved by Samuelson's column on wage stagnation. "I'm glad he came back with that rejoinder," Mathews says. "Of course, it's hard because the numbers [showing rising living standards] aren't in his favor yet."

A number of respected economists, of course, have quite different views of the economy, believing that the trend of growing inequality is stubborn enough to represent a change in the way the economy has worked, or profound enough to require some sort of intervention, or that even if the net outcome of this economic cycle turns out to be positive, the short-term pain caused by the market

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requires attention. But you'll rarely find voices like that—people like Lester Thurow, Paul Krugman, or Paul Romer—on the *Post*'s op-ed page. Robert Kuttner occasionally mounts a defense of traditional liberalism and government policies to help the have-nots; Richard Harwood provides the only remotely populist voice. But the only other weekly economic op-ed columnist is James Glassman. He was helped onto the op-ed page by David Ignatius, wth Don Graham's approval. Once an agent provacateur from the left, Glassman now plays that role from the right.

Glassman's views on narrowing the scope of government often mirror Samuelson's, whom he calls a model. But Glassman goes farther. Several themes permeate his writing. First, "Stop picking on the rich." He has opined that "The Rich Already Pay Plenty" of taxes (he arrived at his figures by neatly excluding Social Security taxes, which impose the heaviest burden on people earning lower incomes). "It's not necessarily good fortune that made them rich ... More likely it was hard work, sacrifice, risk-taking, and brain power," Glassman writes, seeming to forget his own good fortune at being born into the well-off family of a Washington-area contractor. "It's envy season again," began one Glassman column in defense of exorbitant CEO pay.

Glassman's other habitual refrain is "alas." As in, yes, things aren't perfect, but—alas—there's nothing we can do; certainly there's nothing government can do. The answer to inequality, he writes, "is no more mysterious than better training. Alas, politicians and journalists can't much help here, but they can certainly hurt—by exploiting themes of envy and class warfare." In a column opposing an increase in the minimum wage, he lamented society's growing inequality but concluded, "What can [Robert] Reich and his colleagues do to help the working poor? Alas, not much. Like many economic problems, this one is not really amenable to a government solution. Government can help a bit through tax breaks for education—but ultimately the cure for low working wages may be nothing more mysterious than high personal diligence."

"People need to say, 'I personally am going to have to suffer to get better-educated,'" Glassman says. I ask him if he worked to pay his way through Harvard. "Me?" he answers. "No. Not at all."

In the name of diligence, he would ultimately abolish not only the Earned Income Tax Credit, which plenty of liberals and conservatives alike agree rewards diligence, but also student loans—on the grounds that it's not fair for all taxpayers to subsidize college for some when college graduates will earn so much more over their lifetimes. "It comes down to sacrifice," he says. "People need to say, I personally am going to have to suffer while I go to night school, sacrifice things I want to do—to get better-educated." I ask Glassman if he worked to pay his way through Harvard. "Me?" he answers with surprise. "No. Not at all. I didn't pay my way at all."

Glassman claims that his increasing conservatism and push for self-sufficiency resulted from his entrepreneurial experience starting a newspaper in New Orleans in the early seventies, an experience he recounted in the *Monthly* in 1976. In that article, he noted that he and his wife had started the newspaper with "family money." Now, he seems to think it was solely the worth of his idea that convinced investors, and anyone with a good idea could do the same. Back then, he lamented the concentration of venture capital in "fewer and fewer hands" and the way that this was stifling American innovation and shutting out small businesses. Today that concern seems to have fallen off his radar screen—he certainly hasn't written on the plight of small businesses recently.

Glassman is an extremely smart man who has worked hard for his success. But in his insistence that anyone—Harvard-educated or not, backed by family money or not—could do the same through sheer diligence, he seems to forget some of the breaks he had. Glassman doesn't spend much time with the hoi polloi, and among Washington's elite his views on the futility of government and the virtue of the market are increasingly fashionable. His views are also conveniently self-interested. Glassman may feel, for example, that the flat tax would be more fair, but it would also reduce his income tax and eliminate all taxes on his investment income.

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The *Post* does deserve credit for recognizing that the economic, geographical, and educational isolation of its reporters poses a problem. Len Downie, for example, says affirmative action at the *Post* includes seeking reporters with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. With floods of applications from the Ivy League, he says he makes a concerted effort to hire from state schools as well. But, as Downie points out, the *Post* is a prosperous company that pays competitive salaries; that means "people move into a higher income group just by working at *The Washington Post*."

The same is true throughout the media. Juan Williams evokes the image of presidential candidates who stumble when asked if they know the price of milk or bread to describe the economic insulation of reporters. When his wife asked him recently if he knew how much they paid for cable, he had no idea. "In another phase of my life I would have been very aware if those jerks raised the rates," he says. "If you're poor, or working class, and the kids want Disney, believe me you're aware if they raise the rates every six months."

In their youth, many of today's middle-aged journalists saw the world as a place full of injustice, and they saw themselves as people, blessed by birth and brains, with the power and obligation to change that. As they have advanced professionally, their outrage has mellowed, and their critical eye has given way to complacency. Now, they pay high taxes; perhaps their children are in private school, so they resent those taxes, and the government they finance, even more. They look back on their activist college years with a slight sense of embarrassment. Yet in conversation, Glassman, Samuelson, Ignatius, and Mathews all seem more complex and more compassionate than their work suggests—and that leaves open the hope that they may yet be moved to balance apathy with passion and their cynicism about government's failures with constructive alternatives.

The virtue of the Len Downie-era at the *Post*, Steven Pearlstein tells me, is its move away from trying to influence policy, as he claims the *Post* did in the past. "Now we write for readers and to tell the truth," Pearlstein says. In America, however, many truths coexist—businesses prosper, the middle class stagnates, the lower class struggles, the upper class flourishes, stocks rise, the job market churns. Truth matters, but it also matters which truths you choose to print. □

Who's Who

The campaign staff of **Bob Dole** recently asked focus groups to name animals the various candidates reminded them of. The most popular descriptions of **Phil Gramm** were weasel, fox, hyena, ferret, bulldog, and tortoise. **Pat Buchanan** was tagged as a pit bull, badger, and wolverine. Dole himself was likened to a mule, draft horse, German shepherd, elephant, kangaroo, zebra, and chameleon....

Bill Clinton continues to display his ignorance of military matters. According to **John McCaslin** of *The Washington Times*, Clinton, when referring to the bow of an aircraft carrier, pronounced "bow" as in "bow and arrow," and mistakenly identified the *USS Missouri*—World War II's most famous battleship—as an aircraft carrier....

I try to keep you updated on **Kenneth Starr**, the Whitewater independent counsel. The latest disclosure is a list of the private clients Starr has represented since taking over the Whitewater investigation. They include Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corporation, Philip Morris, General Motors, Apple Computer, Bell Atlantic, Hughes Aircraft, Amoco Oil, Southwestern Bell, United Airlines, and—I love this one—the Republican National Committee....

Describing the justification by **Jordan Levy** for the critical vote he cast in the Massachusetts Governors Council to make **Charles Fried** a member of the state's Supreme Court, *The Washington Post*'s **Al Kamen** writes that Levy "established a new standard for confirming judges, replacing the test set in 1970 by former Senator **Roman Hruska** who supported **G. Harrold Carswell**'s nomination to the Supreme Court by saying even 'mediocre people are entitled to a little representation'."

"Charles Fried does not have horns and a long green tail," said Levy in explaining his vote. "He's not a rapist, a murderer or pedophile."...

Does **Bill Clinton** need to worry about the loyalties of his Bosnia negotiator? A recent picture in *Newsweek* shows **Richard Holbrooke** in a plane with a copy of **Colin Powell**'s *My American Journey* on the tray in front of him....

Who is in the inner-circle of the presidential campaigns? At **Phil Gramm** headquarters, it's longtime political consultant **Charlie Black,** but on the Senate side his main advisers include his fellow Texas Senator **Kay Bailey Hutchinson** and Arizona's **John McCain**. **Dave Carney** and **Nelson Warfield** are top advisors to Senator **Bob Dole**'s presidential bid. At the **Pat Buchanan** campaign, the top dog is Pat's sister, **Bay**. But if you want to get a

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message to the candidate you can also try **Terry Jeffries** or **Greg Mueller**. With the Clinton campaign, of course, **Dick Morris** is the man. **Terry McCauliff**, fundraiser extraordinaire, is still playing a major role, as is **Anne Lewis** who will be the chief face for the campaign....

Republicans seem more and more worried that none of their current candidates can defeat **Bill Clinton**. At least that was the impression we got as conservative guru **William Kristol** embraced **Colin Powell**, defending the general on a recent edition of *Crossfire* and to *The New York Post*'s **Deborah Orin**, whom he told: "His appeal on grounds of character and leadership could go quite a long way to overcome ideological doubts, and for many conservatives a Gingrich-led Congress would overcome worries about Powell."...

One little-noted revelation in the new book about **Clark Clifford** by **Douglas Frantz** and **David McKean** is that while Justice **William O. Douglas** was on the Supreme Court and Clifford and his associates were practicing before him, Clifford, on a number of different occasions over many years, loaned Douglas money to pay off his mortgage and other creditors.

As late as 1966, not long before Douglas retired, Clifford guaranteed a $6,150 loan to the Justice from The National Bank of Washington, on whose board Clifford was serving. When asked about the apparent conflict of interest, Clifford replied, "I have always been able to separate my public affairs from my private affairs." Isn't the right question whether Douglas was able to do so—and whether Clifford wanted him to?...

Frank Lombardi of *The New York Daily News* played a little trick on the city's congressional representatives. Each one was sent two letters. One contained a campaign contribution, one did not. Of the 16 answers Lombardi received, 11 were to the letter that contained contributions. Only one representative, **Carolyn Maloney**, had answered both letters in the two-week period congressional offices say they aim to reply by. One, **Major Owen**, had not answered either letter but had cashed the contribution check. We're indebted to **Greg Pierce** of *The Washington Times* for tipping us to Lombardi's story....

White House Press Secretary **Michael McCurry** has announced the appointment of **David T. Johnson** as chief spokesman for the National Security Council and of **Jill A. Schuker** as the top NSC communication official. Since the NSC is in the White House which has a press office and a communications office, why are separate public relations officials needed for the NSC? And did you know the NSC even has its own speechwriter? His name is **Antony Blinken.** And he has two assistants, even though there is an entire White House speechwriters' office....

Stanley Greenberg, who is fighting to retain his role as **Bill Clinton's** pollster, has written a memo to the President recommending that "Bill Clinton must reemerge as someone with an economic vision, populist instincts, and as a cultural conservative."...

Mudge Rose, the New York law firm whose members included **Richard M. Nixon** and **John Mitchell**, will be closing its doors at the end of the year....

Willie Williams, the Los Angeles police chief, was accused of accepting free hotel rooms in Las Vegas. At first he denied it, but confronted with evidence of $1500 in free rooms, the chief said the rooms weren't really free because his wife does a lot of gambling. Do the people of Los Angeles want their chief to have a wife who is in danger of becoming indebted to Las Vegas gamblers? Just a question, but we are curious....

William Safire, *The New York Times* columnist, says **Colin Powell** will not run on **Ross Perot**'s ticket. Safire's reasoning: One of Powell's closest friends, **Richard Armitage**, who Powell describes as "my brother and bodyguard" and a "friend of the heart," was the victim of a character assassination campaign by Perot while Armitage's nomination to be Secretary of the Army was under consideration. "Any political deal between Powell and Perot" writes Safire, "would reflect disloyalty and dishonor on Powell, a man who reveres loyalty and honor."...

Navy Secretary **John Lehman** was one of **Powell**'s bureaucratic enemies in the Reagan administration, but, according to Powell's new book, there was one saying of Lehman's that the general liked: "Power corrupts but absolute power is really neat."...

—Susan Threadgill

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The Washington Monthly Journalism Award

August 1995

In a series of strips in early August, Garry Trudeau put his formidable talent to work explaining one of the most complicated and misunderstood of the Republican initiatives: regulatory reform. Actually, deform is more like it. The *Monthly* has devoted thousands of words to this subject in recent months (See "The Case for (Some) Regulation," March; "Laws for Sale," July/August; "Regulatory Reform: The Case for Common Sense," September). But in just a few panels, Trudeau brilliantly—and hilariously—dissects this egregious betrayal of the public interest.

Doonesbury BY GARRY TRUDEAU

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The Monthly Journalism Award *is presented each month to one or more newspaper, magazine, radio, or television stories (or series of stories) that demonstrate a commitment to the public interest. We are particularly interested in reporting that explains the successes and failures of government agencies at all levels and of other institutions such as the media, corporations, unions, and foundations that contribute to the existence or solution of public problems. Please send nominations (including two copies of the article or broadcast text) to Monthly Journalism Award, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009. Nominations for stories run in October are due November 10.*

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Golden Handcuffs

A third-year law student writes to tell why all his classmates who'd dreamt of government service are heading elsewhere—and why he's having second thoughts, too. With a response from Charles Peters

BY GIBSON CROMWELL

"A top Wall Street law firm is the best place for a young man like yourself to start," the senior partner said. I was dining with the refined, silver-haired man at a pricey Midtown restaurant. My mouth full of chilled salmon, I could only smile, doing my best to demur. After all, I told the partner, I hadn't gone to law school to work for a firm. I wanted to find work that was both interesting and served a purpose beyond just making money.

He had clearly heard this before. In a confident voice, he assured me that joining the civil service would be a mistake—it would mean a lifetime of benchwarming, he said. Joining a firm, on the other hand, would mean professional excellence and a shot at being one of the country's top achievers.

For me, and for perhaps a thousand others who came to the country's top law schools—Harvard, Yale, Stanford, etc.—intent on a career in public service, this man's voice is just one of a chorus. In the summer before our third and final year—the time for career decisions—we weren't being recruited by the Treasury Department or the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). In fact, even civil servants themselves were dissuading us from beginning a career in government. Instead, private firms like Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meager, and Flom were pulling out every stop to get us to come aboard—and succeeding. We came to law school, I thought, not for money or job security, but because we wanted to serve our country. Now we're told that if we really want to make a difference we should steer clear of the civil service. Many of my friends are convinced. Now I'm wavering, too.

People go to law school for many reasons: to secure a healthy future income, to please their families, maybe even because they don't know what else to do. Then, when graduation time comes, a vast majority ask only two questions: "Which firm?" and "How much money?" Yet a good number of young American men and women study law because they want to enter American public life. This was certainly true for me. My love for politics and public policy began in high school,

Gibson Cromwell is a pseudonym for a third year student at one of the nation's top law schools.

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when I spent a summer working for a U.S. senator. The next summer, I worked in the governor's office. During college, I worked abroad at a U.S. embassy; later, I worked in Washington, writing cables to far-flung diplomatic posts.

It was heady and fun—drafting speeches for a Cabinet officer, negotiating with Japanese diplomats, chatting with French military attachés. Of course, for many people Wall Street is probably heady and fun too, but when I was working for the government, I also had the feeling that my work had real significance. At the SEC, for example, lawyers do valuable and important work, protecting investors against fraud while helping the country's financial markets to run smoothly and fairly.

A utilities regulator must balance efficiency and equity—making sure everyone has access to service, on the one hand, while also preserving the incentives and efficiency of the free market on the other. It's a complex job that requires an understanding of the law and the underlying technological issues, as well as the needs of different communities. Contrast this with a lawyer appearing before a regulatory commission. The regulator is charged with the public interest, the private lawyer is not.

During law school, I followed my fascination—friends called it an "obsession"—with government service. I worked two more summers in foreign policy jobs in Washington. I loved this work and thought I'd found my calling.

Now, as I face graduation in just seven months, I'm not sure what I'm going to do. Already, many of my service-minded classmates have jumped ship—they're set on joining a firm, or, in a few cases, a nonprofit group or some other unorthodox organization. But they are not applying for government jobs.

Paper Chase

If you were to attend Washington alumni fêtes for, say, Stanford, Chicago, or Columbia law schools, you'd see this trend writ large. Among the throngs of navy-blue suits, only a tiny minority would be permanent civil servants. Most would work for law firms. Some might be shooting to be law professors or politicians. Others would have left law altogether and gone to work in business.

It starts the moment you arrive on campus. Ambitious young men and women—and I certainly cannot deny being ambitious—are pointed away from a career in government from the start. It's an unwritten rule: If you want to make a difference—if you want to make something of yourself—stay away from the civil service. It's a dead end.

How does this message come through? Well, for better or for worse, nothing drives lawyers more forcefully than prestige. They worship it. In the legal profession, the highest totem of all is where you went to school. Throughout your career, the name of your law school is a halo around your head (or an albatross around your neck). Even after decades of work—even after retirement—lawyers are still identified as "Michigan grads" or "Yalies." In law, there's a hierarchy of schools as well-ordered as the electromagnetic spectrum. The rankings in *U.S. News & World Report* are just for the outsiders. Insiders already know the caste system and everybody's place in it.

After sending in the first tuition check, the aspiring lawyer looks forward to three years of often-inane hoop-jumping for prestige. Take law review, the biggest prize you can snag while still in school. Students "edit" professors' articles for publication, though the word "edit" is loosely defined: Here it means toiling endlessly over their footnotes to enforce the application of arcane grammar rules, to replace every "which" with a "that," to ensure that the word "Columbia" never appears in any citation ("Colum." is preferred). This work is mind-numbing, but students are quickly blinded by the bright lights of prestige. Once told that law review is important, they will soon argue heatedly—as I overheard a gaggle of future pettifoggers do—over the existence of that mythical beast, the italicized period.

It's all part of the acculturation. Lest some foolish soul neglect the great weight of prestige, there are many reminders. You can barely go through the day without hearing students chat obsessively in the hallways about the worth of various firms. "I hear Boring, Boring, and Blah-blah-blah has many nice people, but ... it's not really a top-tier firm." God, you think, I'd better scratch that place—I'm not a second-tier guy, or

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at least I don't think so....

In this environment, the civil service doesn't fare well. Society's evaluations condense into an accepted wisdom. Certain jobs are prestigious; others aren't. A civil service job is decidedly not. In the world of the law student, the lawyers at top law firms garner far more respect. Remember the senior partner who advised me to start at a Wall Street law firm? The subtext of his message was that I could forget working at his firm if I stepped into government. If I went to government, another lawyer hinted, I'd become like the rest of the career bureaucrats. (Even in Washington, saying you're a career bureaucrat is not the best way to get a date.)

Even among public servants themselves, government work is looked down upon. When I applied for a job with a federal agency that appears regularly on *The Washington Post*'s front page, one staffer with impressive credentials of his own said to me, "With a resume like this why aren't you going to work at a law firm?" I also noticed that government lawyers hold in higher esteem colleagues who worked in private firms before joining the government. When I said to co-workers that a colleague impressed me, I would often hear, "Yeah, she's smart. I think she started at Big-Name-Firm." It was as if they were saying, "She could still be there if she wanted." (The obvious retort: "Yes, and she seems to prefer working for the government." But no one says that.)

The Line

To understand why civil servants are held in such low regard in this prestige-driven profession, glance at an organizational chart for any major federal agency. You'll see a line. Above that line, important decisions start to be made; below it, people implement them. And that line falls precisely where the top tiers of the civil service give way to the bottom ranks of the political appointees. The Departments of Defense and the Treasury are typical examples: The secretary, deputy secretary, undersecretaries, assistant secretaries, and deputy assistant secretaries all serve at the pleasure of the president. (In turn, the cadres of special assistants and chiefs of staff serve at their pleasure.) Policy jobs at the White House and chiefs of staff to a Cabinet secretary are all political appointments. Only below them do civil servants fill up the ranks.

Of course, civil servants do wield a great deal of power in practice. I've seen it at work. The professional who's been at, say, Health and Human Services for 16 years can often run circles around the political appointee who has only been there six months. And even when the bosses are experienced, implementing decisions does carry certain de facto policymaking power. I'm no stranger to the real responsibilities that come with the civil service; they are responsibilities that I've already shouldered and enjoyed.

But, I must admit, like my ambitious friends, I eventually want to do more than just implement the policies of others. I want to make them myself. So how do you get to be one of these important decision-makers? Theoretically, of course, civil servants can receive political appointments. It is not unheard of—Lawrence Eagleburger, for example, served as secretary of state. But it is somewhat rare. Of the hundreds of top Clinton Administration officials, you'd be hard-pressed to find 10 who rose through the civil service. Robert Rubin came from Wall Street, Warren Christopher from O'Melveny and Myers, Robert Reich from Harvard. I'd have a better shot at these positions, I hear again and again, if I took a high-powered legal job or if I entered academia. That's a hard message to ignore.

The problem, of course, with joining a law firm with the eventual goal of working for government is what you might call "golden handcuffs." Dozens of classmates have told me that they're only going to law firms for two or three years, "just to get some training." They strain as if trying to convince themselves. But all too often, once the law firms have got you, you're hooked. The most senior career attorney in government will earn $115,000 a year. Even young lawyers can get $62,473. That's plenty of money. But in any of 20 big New York law firms, you can make $150,000 before you're 30.

Soon, you get used to that kind of money. Only the most puritan lawyer resists becoming accustomed to living well—to eating sushi and vacationing in Mexico and sending the kids to private schools. If you have a family, they subtly but certainly add to the pressure. Your notion of

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fair value also creeps upwards. What once sounded like a bounty of gold begins to shrink. Unmarried twentysomethings making $150,000 would seem to have plenty of money. But I often hear lawyers complaining about how much the investment bankers make. "I could do what they do, and they're making so much more than I am!" a self-proclaimed Marxist whimpered while working on Wall Street.

The Other Way

Even if these people do end up in public service work eventually, something seems not quite right about gunning for a top government job by spending a life working on Wall Street. In a number of other leading democracies, entering the nation's service isn't one of the least-coveted choices by the best students—it's the most. The reason is that, in those places, career civil servants heavily influence policymaking at the highest levels. When those top students look 30 years into the future, they know they have a shot at the top.

In Japan, for example, the best students from the best department of the best university—the Tokyo University Law Department—stream into the Finance and Foreign Ministries, where they stay until the end of their working lives. An acquaintance of mine at the Ministry of Finance, Kazuo, represents the quintessence of the Japanese civil service. When Kazuo graduated from Tokyo Law, he could have had any job in business or banking that he desired (all of which would have paid much better than the Ministry). He, like many of his classmates, decided instead to join the government—for life.

Western European countries are similar to Japan. In France, the very best students pass through one of the *grandes écoles* (especially the École Nationale d'Administration, or "ENA") and then maybe into one of the five *grands corps d'état*—elite divisions of the French civil service. The newly elected French president, Jacques Chirac, is an ENA alumnus—as is his Socialist rival, Lionel Jospin. In Britain, the dominance of Oxbridge-graduated senior civil servants earns them the title of "mandarins," in a conscious echo of pre-revolutionary China.

In our system, you have to wonder about the background of those who ultimately accept a high public office. They may be bright and hard-working, but does a law firm provide the right training to help run the federal government? For 20 years, while they were becoming experts in the nuances of tax law and securities filings, their counterparts in France and Britain were moving steadily upwards in their ministries, learning along the way how broad policies are actually implemented. In 25 years, my friend will likely be heading up the Japanese Finance Ministry's international finance section. His American counterpart may have spent 20 years at Goldman, Sachs issuing bonds for General Electric. Who is more fit to govern?

The fact of the matter is that to get the very best people for a particular career, you have to do more than appeal to their sense of duty and excitement. You have to appeal, in some way, to their ambition. I'm not saying hand them the key to the city at age 25. But you have to hold out the promise that, with hard work and diligence, they can do important things, and yes, be important themselves.

I'm not prepared to demonize ambition. Of course, it has its dark side. But ambition often drives us to do good things, to achieve, and to excel.

Consider the case of a civil servant I know named Sam. He's as bright a lawyer as you'll find in Washington. Hard-working, too—you'll find him in at 8:00 a.m. and staying until 7:00 p.m. or later on most nights, hours after some colleagues have gone home. But, though he's not yet 45, he has topped out—unless appointed,

PROBLEMS WITH YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?

PLEASE SEND A NOTE TO:

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The Washington Monthly
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Washington, D.C. 20009

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Sam can no longer be promoted. If he stays in government, he'll be there at the same government-issue desk in 2020. The country is lucky to have him. But when you encounter too many stories like Sam's, you realize why many people don't rush to follow in his footsteps.

I'm not saying that we should abandon our democratic system and turn over every level of government to the technocrats. Presidents should bring in their own people to run the show. One of the secrets of FDR's success was that he was able to hire more than 2 million of his own people. But in order to attract the best and the brightest to government work, there has to be a strong sense that the civil service is *not* a dead end, that slaving away in the Labor Department would be just as valuable as 10 years at the Brookings Institution or at Skadden, Arps. Presidents and Cabinet officials need to actively seek out bright and qualified civil servants for top posts. And for those law students who never even consider public work—there are plenty, believe me—the government should be actively and vigorously recruiting, getting the word out about the terrific jobs that are there.

As it is now, the voices of prestige and ambition sing in unison to me and my like-minded classmates: Stay away from the government, join a law firm. I doubt you'll see me on Wall Street. But I am also reluctant to join the civil service, and that's the career I'd always dreamt of having. □

Charles Peters Responds

First, are you really sure that interesting work in the service of a good cause won't be enough. Do you really need prestige, too? I can assure you that I was happier in each of the four government jobs I held than I was practicing law.

Second, let me also assure you that just because you do not have one of the top appointed or elective positions, doesn't mean you won't have enough power to make a difference. When I was what seemed to be the lowliest of the low—clerk of the Judiciary Committee of the West Virginian legislature—I had more effective power then I had when I was an elected member of the legislature. The reason is that because it was my job to understand the contents of each bill, I was looked on as the source of objective advice on how to vote, an opportunity that I did not shirk—and one that, later, as a member, I did not have to the same degree because I was perceived as less objective.

Later, as head of the Peace Corps evaluation division, I had more effective power in my agency than any member of Congress or even the White House. Of course, they *could* have had more influence, but the truth is that Washington's big shots usually do not try to participate in the day-to-day operational decisions of an agency. Thus, in 1962 as a GS-14—a rank open to you with a few years experience and which incidentally would pay a not-exactly miserable wage of $62,473 to $81,217—I had more to do with what actually happened at the Peace Corps than any of those "prestigious" officials you yearn to join. I was 34 at the time, but Bill Moyers had even more influence at the Peace Corps, and he was only 26.

One of the saddest experiences of my life has been to watch the friends who had a yen for public life join fancy law firms, hoping that demonstrating ability there would lead to high office. The longer they wait, the higher and more prestigious the office must be in order to compensate for the loss of income. So, by the end, only "Secretary of State" will do. Since that call rarely comes, most of these people are left disappointed as their lives come to a close.

I wish I had done more to tell my friends how much pure fun I had in the government. Even playing a minor role in the truly great game is simply more exhilarating then getting a tax break for some scumbag. (See "Working for the Government is Cool," by Gareth Cook, page 38.)

So this is my message to you, and to anyone else out there like you: Save yourselves while there is still time. Do something that you believe in, that you like doing, and that, regardless of how it is esteemed by the world, *you* will be proud of. □

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Working for the Government is Cool

Memo to twentysomethings: Forget about law school. Do work that's interesting, rewarding, and important

BY GARETH COOK

One week, Dana Scully and Fox Mulder are rescuing New Hampshire school children from a ring of Satanic parents. The next they are exploring a series of unexplained murders near a traveling circus. Scully is a trained physician and Mulder has an advanced degree in psychology, but neither chose to set up a private practice. Instead, they opted for jobs that take them to the distant corners of the country—from the Arctic Circle to the Arizona desert. They are FBI agents on "The X-Files," one of television's hottest shows.

An advertisement for the show features a shot of Scully and Mulder with a striking headline: "Working for the government is cool." It's a clever attention getter, an ironic message not to be taken seriously. Indeed, when you set aside the glamorous gun-toters (who themselves risk the "jackbooted fascist" label), the image of the government worker is decidedly *un*cool.

It's amazing what a bad rap government workers get. People who work in all levels of government—federal, state, and local—are written off with a label that has a powerful hold over the country's imagination: bureaucrat. The word evokes images of monotonous and pointless office jobs, reams of unneeded paperwork, lazy and dim-witted workers. A *Wall Street Journal* editorial writer, for example, recently wrote without a hint of shame that the typical bureaucrat is "a pudgy, middle-aged woman slowly applying polish to her fingernails. Every few minutes, she picks up the phone to conduct a conversation with one of her cronies in an adjoining office." A newspaper ad by R.J. Reynolds features a middle-aged man, triple-jowled and smiling creepily, underneath the headline "Who Should Be Responsible For Your Children, a Bureaucrat or You?"

It has not always been this way. "In the nineteenth century," says Scott Fossler, president of the National Association of Public Administrators, "'Good enough for government work' meant high-quality." Even in this century, great presidents inspired Americans to join the government and honor its work. FDR called on the nation to conquer the Depression, largely through government projects, and to win World War II. President Kennedy was

Additional research and reporting provided by Renée Swanson.

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able to generate a real excitement for the work of government—you could go to Ethiopia with the Peace Corps or to the moon with NASA. "With FDR and Kennedy, the government had a noble, respected mission," says Fossler. "People had a sense that the government was doing important things." "Ask not what your country can do for you," Kennedy famously declared. Now, egged on by politicians who've made careers of bashing government, many Americans publicly ask whether anyone can do much of anything.

Certainly, the American public sector has plenty of maddening bureaucrats. Rooting out bad government is one of the *Monthly*'s founding causes. Because of overly zealous civil service protections, it can be almost impossible to fire mediocre, or even incompetent, employees. This is a problem not only for those who want service—I doubt I am the only one who has left the local Department of Motor Vehicles feeling angry and exhausted—but it can also be bad for morale. The public employee unions need to see that nobody's interest is served in keeping a lug on the job.

But the perception that all government employees are indolent, ineffective bureaucrats cloistered inside the Beltway is simply wrong. First, most government employees do not work for the federal government. The federal government employs 3 million people, while state and local governments employ 15 million. Second, most federal employees don't even work in Washington: Some 85 percent of them are out in the field.

More to the point, there are many good people in government, and many have interesting jobs. Consider a few pop-culture heroes: Clint Eastwood, the Secret Service agent protecting the president in *In the Line of Fire*; the engineers of *Apollo 13*; the doctors and nurses of "ER"; or "Quincy," the medical examiner who always gets his man. All of these are government jobs.

Plenty of other jobs haven't been the topic of a movie or TV show, but easily could be. You could be one of the National Transportation Safety Board investigators who pores through the twisted metal and plastic of a plane wreck, in search of the clue that will explain the cause of the accident—and, hopefully, prevent it from happening again. Or you could work for the Securities and Exchange Commission, trying to figure out the cons of some of the nation's most devious criminal minds. Or maybe a park ranger job—a historian and preservationist, who has plenty of contact with people, and does most of the day's work in nature's glory—is more your style. "Our big secret" says Greg Carlile, a game warden with Washington state who, among other things, catches salmon poachers, "is that we're getting paid to do work that we love."

Yet I can't count the number of times that I've heard the familiar refrain from my twentysomething friends: "I'm not sure what I want to do; I guess I'll go to law school." "I don't really want to be a lawyer," they usually protest, as if the almost inevitable path to a fairly tedious legal job will not be followed. (See "Golden Handcuffs," page 33.) Why is law school their fall-back position, when they could go into work that is both interesting and satisfying?

The Name Game

One answer has to be the perverse pride that government at all levels seems to take in devising dreary job titles. How boring does a job as an "Animal Health Technician" sound? That's actually the title for what would better be described as the government's cowboys. Their job is to track down and lasso wild livestock that has wandered over the Mexican border carrying diseases. They spend the work week far from civilization, on horseback in the vast spaces between Brownsville and Del Rio, camping under the stars at night. Who would have guessed?

Or consider the dreary-sounding Texas Office of the State Comptroller. The words evoke rich images—flickering fluorescent lights, tortuous standard forms, bleary-eyed lifers counting the days to retirement. So why does Alan Pollock, a 40-year old father of two and the director of the office's "performance review" division, love his job? And why is the Austin-based comptroller's office described in heroic terms by the citizens of

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Texas?

The answer is that Pollock and his colleagues are a far cry from the unimaginative pencil-pushers you might have envisioned and much closer to being the shock troops of good government—part journalists, part detectives, part problem-solvers, part enforcers. Their small office, with a creative, can-do attitude reminiscent of a start-up software company, is charged with examining the way the state government does just about everything—from welfare to the work of state troopers—in search of ways to do it better.

One of their most public successes was also one of Pollock's most personally satisfying: a plan for sweeping changes at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) that was adopted with praise. For years, there had been talk of waste and mismanagement in the prison system, so Pollock and his colleagues were called in.

They found plenty to fix. Pollock tells of his amazement at seeing the 3x5 cards—with tiny writing scrawled over front and back and stored in what looked like shoe boxes—which were being used to keep track of the prisoners. Meanwhile, the computer terminals scattered all over the complex went unused. When Pollock's team noticed guards standing around with little to do, they did a little digging and discovered that the Texas prisons had about 1.5 times as many guards as comparable systems in other states. TDCJ officials tried to say that none of the changes needed to be made. "But we knew their operations backwards and forwards," says Pollock, "so we were calling their bullshit 'bullshit'."

Today the prisons are doing away with the old card system, guards are being used more intelligently, and the comptroller's work has already saved grateful Texans hundreds of millions of dollars. Now Pollock is gearing up for a major investigation of the state mental health system. "It's great," says Pollock. "Every project is different, and you can see that you're actually changing things." Publicity about their success has brought another change: The office is flooded with résumés from people who want a job at a place called the "Texas Office of the State Comptroller." And there are many other fascinating jobs like Pollock's in the government, at places with unlikely sounding names like the "Government Accounting Office" and the "Office of Management and Budget."

The fun jobs don't always get a lot of publicity, though. A friend of mine went to her college career office to look at job descriptions for federal positions she had heard were interesting. "They were virtually unreadable," she says. "You could not even tell what the person did." Unfortunately, sometimes, that's the whole idea. Those who are already in the know don't necessarily want a lot of outside competition for great jobs that they'd rather give to their own pals. This, long-time readers of the *Monthly* will recognize, is what's known as the "buddy system": Write job descriptions for the good jobs to match the qualifications of friends, and make the jobs sound uninviting to strangers. The unfortunate side effect, of course, is that it feeds the public's view of drones at work and scares away young talent. The actual process of applying for government jobs can also be off-putting—it can take too long to move through the process.

For those who take the plunge, though, the excitement of some government jobs can be addictive. Try to imagine the rush of knowing that swarms of 400-ton jet aircraft, filled with passengers, are depending on you to help them navigate through crowded skies. You could ask the air traffic controllers who were fired by Reagan: Many simply could not find work that was as satisfying in the private sector. They always dream of coming back.

And very few private sector jobs can compare to being a homicide detective. Consider Jerry Giorgio, a detective with the New York Police Department's 34th precinct, and the subject of a fascinating profile in *The New York Times*. One fall evening in 1981, John Chase Wood, a surgery resident at the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, was shot through the heart during a mugging. He bled to death at the hospital where he worked, leaving behind a young, pregnant wife. Long after most of the city had forgotten the slaying, Det. Giorgio continued to painstakingly track down leads. He finally cracked the case and made an arrest last summer. Earlier this year, he arrested the criminal's partner.

Giorgio prides himself on never forgetting a case. Three years ago, he solved a case from 1974. The family of Guadalupe Diaz, a 56-year-old widow whose killer Giorgio collared, still

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sends him Christmas cards. "[He] is a legend," Assistant Chief John Hill told the *Times*. "If there were 1,000 Jerry Giorgio's, there would be no need for the city's 29,000 policemen."

A question for the law-school bound: Which sounds more interesting—helping to decipher the latest corporate tax rules or piecing together the clues that point the way to a killer on the loose? One of the central facts that has been lost in the latest paroxysm of government bashing is that government workers are serving the public. In fact, the desire to do something more satisfying than devising a better way to market high-top sneakers is what draws many talented people to these jobs in the first place. Consider the researchers with the Centers for Disease Control who wrestle with the latest viruses to prevent another plague. Or think about the case worker who saves children from truly awful situations—the raging drug-addicted mother, the father who won't stop beating his family. Tough jobs, but, as the workers will tell you, it genuinely feels good to do their part to improve society.

To judge from letters that Joe Hoffman gets, New Yorkers remember the day that he saved the city. Hoffman is the man in charge of keeping the city's subways—750 miles of track and 168 stations—running under sometimes crazy conditions. So he was the one who got the phone call at 5 a.m. on a Sunday morning in July. A 4-foot water pipe, among the city's largest, had burst under Times Square. Whole trains were under water, and the flooding was flowing south down Manhattan, burying the two main north-south lines in water and mud. With morning rush hour only 24 hours away, it looked like the entire city would be filled with snarled traffic and hundreds of thousands of angry commuters. Just about everyone agreed that the next few days would be trying for a city not known for its patience.

Just about everyone, that is, except Hoffman, a tough-talking former Marine who doesn't believe in excuses. "Joe Hoffman said 'I'll have it back up in 24 hours, in time for [morning] rush hour'," recalls one of his co-workers.

Hoffman organized nearly 1,000 transit workers and put them on the enormous job: Hundreds of electric switch boxes were covered in muck and had to be hand-cleaned, electric relays needed to be replaced, mud needed to be removed from under the third rails by hand. Hoffman even pitched in himself. He was seen mopping the floors and showing new workers how to operate the pumps. By Monday morning, just before rush hour, Hoffman was riding the test train through the flood zone. He had kept his promise. To get the subways running again, he had to stay up for 24 hours straight. "This is my job," he says. "You would do exactly the same thing if it were your job."

Or would you? How many people feel that their work affects so many people's personal lives that they cannot go home until their job has been done right? The popular conception of a government job is that it is removed from people and essentially powerless. But public workers often have much more power than their private counterparts, because their work has a real impact on lives. The reason that Hoffman was willing to forgo sleep—beyond his dogged determination—is that people depend on him. The same could be said of emergency medical technicians, who spend their days saving lives. Or consider Jim Bradford, a rehabilitation therapist with the Veterans Administration in Long Beach, California. Instead of providing the usual physical therapy, with monotonous leg lifts and arm extensions, he redesigned a garden for his patients to work in, complete with wheelchair-accessible sidewalks and planting beds. These disabled veterans of war get their exercise, and a measure of satisfaction, by cutting flowers and planting vegetables for the hospital cafeteria.

You also do not need to be one of the top guys—one of the "political appointees" with a fancy title—to have real influence. In the first issue of the *Monthly*, Bill Moyers told of how two civil servants, Chester Cooper and George Carver, were able to convince President Johnson's highest policy advisors to stop the escalation in Vietnam. And Thomas Joe, a federal welfare official, told *The Washington Post* of how he personally put a 26-word clause into a law, virtually unnoticed, that expanded the Social Security Insurance program and cost the government billions of dollars a year. In the second case, the influence was not as admirable, but the point remains: You do not need a high-profile job to make a huge difference.

The ambitious who see glamour in high-profile private sector jobs should talk to Bill Crowfoot, who was recently profiled in the *Los Ange-*

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les Times. He had hit the big time: a well-paying job as a corporate lawyer for Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker, specializing in Latin American work. But one day this past spring, as he was drafting a particularly dull promissory note, he thought: "I can't go on with this."

So Crowfoot gave up a lucrative future as a corporate lawyer and decided to take a job with the Pasadena public schools. Fluent in Spanish, he was able to receive an emergency certification and land a teaching position.

Like any first-year teacher, Crowfoot finds the work exhausting. His classes include students of all levels—in one of his classes, he is supposed to be teaching 11th graders World History at the same time he is teaching 10th graders American History—and some of them are recent immigrants who don't know the first thing about either topic. The kids aren't allowed to take their textbooks home because, Crowfoot says, "we might never see them again." Many of the kids come from poor backgrounds; some of them are involved with gangs. Some kids fear being seen carrying around books or notepaper because they might be labeled a "school boy" and become a target of harassment.

But even in these circumstances, Crowfoot is able to make a difference in a few lives. He set up a file cabinet in his room with a folder for each student, so they can keep their notes without fearing the "school boy" label. In his 12th grade economics class, where many eyes glaze over almost instinctively, Crowfoot broke through by having them read an article in *Inc.* magazine about entrepreneurs. "The lowest paid one earned $72,000 to distribute *VW* auto parts," says Crowfoot, "and the kids said, 'I can do that'." Crowfoot also phoned the parents of one kid who shows real academic promise but had been dressing the part of a gang-banger; "I wanted the parents to know that he could be a star if he doesn't make some bad choices," says Crowfoot. And he's even invited kids to his house on the weekend to catch up on English.

"I don't want to overstate the amount of impact that teachers have," insists Crowfoot, and with the moments of job satisfaction comes plenty of frustration. Yet he knows that he now has real power to do something positive in people's lives. So Crawfoot laughs when asked if he misses the old job. "Sure, I make less money now, but even most lawyers are mortgaged to the hilt," he says. "People live to their incomes." And as hard as teaching gets, he says, few things could be worse than "getting up at 4 a.m. to revise and proof legal documents."

Indeed, imagine what a bad rap the *private* sector would have if everyone devoted the same energies to bashing it as they devote to pillorying public employees: Who would want to spend their time, people could say sarcastically, shuffling from sales meeting to sales meeting where nothing ever gets decided? Or would you prefer to find obscure tax loopholes for a faceless corporation? Or do you want to work for the same idiots who managed to spill crude oil across 45 miles of Prince William Sound? It wouldn't be long before just about any job would sound like the seventh circle of Hades.

But it shouldn't be the aim of our political dialogue to demonize work, should it? What we need is for our national leaders—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—to agree that the work government does, be it federal, state, or local, is important, and that the people who do it deserve respect. Even as they disagree about the scope of government, or whether the federal government should devolve responsibility downward, they should put aside reflexive bureaucrat-bashing and call on the nation's best and brightest to serve.

Some might say that this message doesn't make any sense in a time of government downsizing. But the opposite is much nearer to the truth. When we are asking more and more of fewer people, isn't it all the more important to have the very best? Isn't that something that Democrats and Republicans can agree on?

Imagine if Clinton kept reminding the nation that public service is noble. Think of Newt Gingrich encouraging people to join the revolution by working to transform the public sector. Others could pick up the non-partisan message that we all want a government that works for the people, that we need a constant supply of talent, and that government employees deserve respect.

Perhaps then, more of my friends who feel lost, or who are taking the Law School Admissions Test out of inertia, would hear the call. And, perhaps, it wouldn't be too long before everyone would be saying it: "Working for the government is cool." □

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Tidbits & Outrages

LESSONS IN PUBLIC SPEAKING, PART ONE
At a meeting of students in Fairbanks, Alaska, Rep. Don Young argued against federal funding for the arts. Young said the government had funded "photographs of people doing offensive things." Asked for an example, he answered "buttfucking." The congressman said he was "trying to educate" the students.

LESSONS IN PUBLIC SPEAKING, PART TWO
Doris Allen recently retired as speaker of the California State Assembly, but not before labeling her critics "power-mongering men with short penises."

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN WILL STAND ON STAGE SWEATING, WITH A FIVE O'CLOCK SHADOW, AND LIE
The Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace is staging a musical extravaganza in Yorba Linda, California, to be called Nixonpalooza.

THE HUNT FOR BREAD IN OCTOBER
The Russian Navy is using decommissioned nuclear subs to deliver supplies to remote Arctic regions of the country.

THOSE DAMN LIBERAL REDNECKS
In a September installment of "Larry King Live" (guest-hosted by Robert Novak), Senator Jesse Helms took a call from Tilk, Alabama. "I just think that you should get a Nobel Peace Prize for everything you've done to help keep down the niggers," the caller said. "Thank you, I think," Helms replied. He later added, "I think it was a set up—one of the liberals."

NEXT MONTH: WARREN CHRISTOPHER AND FABIO

THE NATION'S CAPITAL DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS SERIES

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Tuesday, October 10, 1995

President George Bush and Mrs. Barbara Bush
Monday, January 22 ,1996

Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan
Monday, March 4, 1996

Ms. Oprah Winfrey
Monday, April 8, 1996

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On Political Books

Big Ben

Ben Bradlee left behind a fine newspaper, and a lot of good stories, but he didn't understand why journalism needs to explain

BY JAMES FALLOWS

A Good Life
Ben Bradlee, *Simon & Schuster, $27.50*

During the 25 years in which he personified and dominated *The Washington Post*, from the mid-1960s through the early 1990s, Ben Bradlee was known for two main traits.

One was having made the *Post* a plausible national contender to *The New York Times*. The *Times* still has fundamental advantages—nationwide circulation, a more extensive foreign staff, more plugged-in coverage of New York-based activities like finance, publishing, culture, and art. Yet the *Post* is more plugged into Washington politics. And it now seems perfectly natural to say "the *Post* and the *Times*."

Thirty years ago, when Katharine Graham lured Bradlee from *Newsweek* to the *Post*, it would have been a stretch to compare the two papers. It is true that the rise of the *Post* depended on a string of shrewd business decisions by Graham, who took over the paper after her husband's suicide in 1963 with almost no management experience. Yet Bradlee was the one responsible for recruiting and then motivating waves of talented reporters, writers, and editors. Bradlee describes his excitement in bringing to the *Post* David Broder—then a rising-star political reporter, and the first prominent journalist ever to leave the *Times* for the *Post*. Even before the Woodward and Bernstein era of the 1970s, the *Post* was becoming a sexy destination for ambitious reporters.

Bradlee's second claim to fame was his personal style. Dapper and dashing, with a face often described in print as that of an international jewel thief, Bradlee charmed many people in his orbit. The most significant charmee was no doubt Graham. In his book, Bradlee describes her as making all the crucial go/no-go decisions on publishing the Pentagon Papers and the touchiest Watergate stories, but these decisions were no doubt easier for Graham because of her faith in Bradlee. The cult of Bradlee at the *Post* did have its excesses, as when in the late 1970s, ambitious editors there imitated his British-tailored clothes. But he seems to have gone through life leaving people grateful for their contact with him.

Bradlee's autobiography is a surprisingly charming work that sheds light on both aspects of his reputation. The book's greatest success, and the source of the surprise, is how clearly it conveys his personality. Because journalists live so fully in the "now," their memoirs are often disappointing. Details that seemed so compelling on deadline often lose their sparkle when retold a generation later. Moreover, colorful personality traits often come through poorly in autobiographies. Lyndon Johnson's real effect on his contemporaries was completely lost in his stiff autobiography, *The Vantage Point*.

Bradlee has written a book that, as best as I can judge from slight acquaintance with him, gives a realistic, vivid sense of his character. This is especially so in the first half of the book, which describes his adventures before he joined the *Post*. (The second half is less fresh, perhaps because the events themselves, notably Watergate, are so familiar.) In one photo-caption, Bradlee writes that, late in life, he has tried to look pensive when be-

James Fallows is a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly *and Washington editor of* The Atlantic Monthly.

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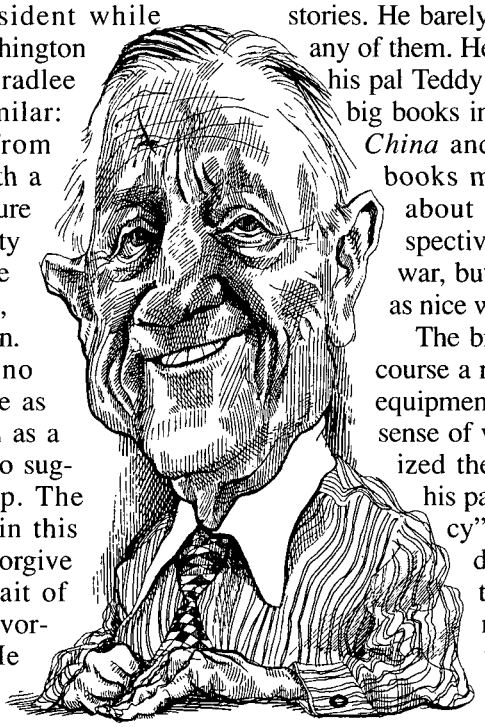
ing photographed, befitting his role as an elder statesman. In that one picture he does indeed look somber—but the pose has to have been an act of will, for in the other photos he has a more natural "I love life!" grin. Some of the episodes Bradlee describes are unpleasant—his bout with polio as a child or the failure of his first two marriages. But this man does not seem to suffer many blue days.

Bradlee has of course made much of his friendship with his Georgetown neighbor, John Kennedy, who became president while Bradlee was *Newsweek*'s Washington bureau chief. Superficially Bradlee and Kennedy seem quite similar: good-looking young men from Boston and Harvard, both with a roving eye, both with the mixture of high-mindedness and maturity that came from naval duty in the South Pacific. Yet, in retrospect, Bradlee seems a far warmer man. Time and again, and with no irony, Bradlee refers to people as his "pals." The term dates him as a World War II character but also suggests a genuine comradeship. The warmth that comes through in this book even makes the reader forgive one real oddity: Bradlee's trait of quoting, at length, people's favorable comments about him. He reprints not one but three favorable fitness reports from his naval superiors, and he ends the book with extensive excerpts from the laudatory speeches his *Post* colleagues gave when he retired.



Bradlee's personality mattered not just to the *Post* but to journalism in general, in a way that is comparable to Kennedy's effect on the image of government. Each man made it seem glamorous, noble, and *fun* to join him in his enterprise; on balance, both journalism and government work better with this spirit than without it.

Although it makes me feel like the humorless weenies that dapper young Benjy Bradlee would have mocked in his prep school years, I must say that Bradlee's account also explains what was wrong with his tenure at the *Post*. Bradlee is obviously intelligent (he got good grades at St. Marks, and tells us so), but he is no intellectual. His adventures as a reporter touched on many of the world-changing events of his lifetime—World War II, the re-emergence of Europe after the war, the anti-colonialist fight in Africa and Asia in the 1950s, McCarthyism, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, the rise of Nixon and Carter and Reagan. But with the exception of discussing the ways that World War II affected him and the country, there is very little sign that Bradlee viewed these events as anything more than great stories. He barely says what he thought about any of them. He mentions, for example, that his pal Teddy White had success with two big books in the 1950s, *Thunder Out of China* and *Fire In the Ashes*. These books made important arguments about how Asia and Europe, respectively, would change after the war, but Bradlee treats them mainly as nice windfalls for his buddy.

The breaking-news mentality is of course a necessary part of a reporter's equipment, and it is connected to the sense of verve and fun that characterized the *Post*'s Bradlee years. But his patent lack of interest in "policy" is part of the reason for the dutiful, wood-chopping nature of the *Post*'s "explanatory" journalism in his era and to a degree even now. Under Len Downie, the steadier, plainer, more "issues-minded" successor to Bradlee, the *Post* tries harder to tell big, non-breaking stories in interesting ways. But it still bears the mark of Bradlee's legendary excitement about exposés and scoops about inside politics, and his "Oh, Jesus, another series" fatalism about projects that would tell people how an industry or government agency actually works. When the *Post* produces such a series, it often seems to bear the invisible headline: "Maybe this will be long and worthy enough to win a Pulitzer Prize." Bradlee also passes along a revealing joke: the *Post*'s in-house acronym SMERSH, which stood for stories on "Science, Medicine, Education, Religion, and all that SHit." The point is not that the paper fails to cover big issues but that it often does so in the spirit of Sunday confessional, having spent the other six days doing what it really enjoys. □

Roman Genn

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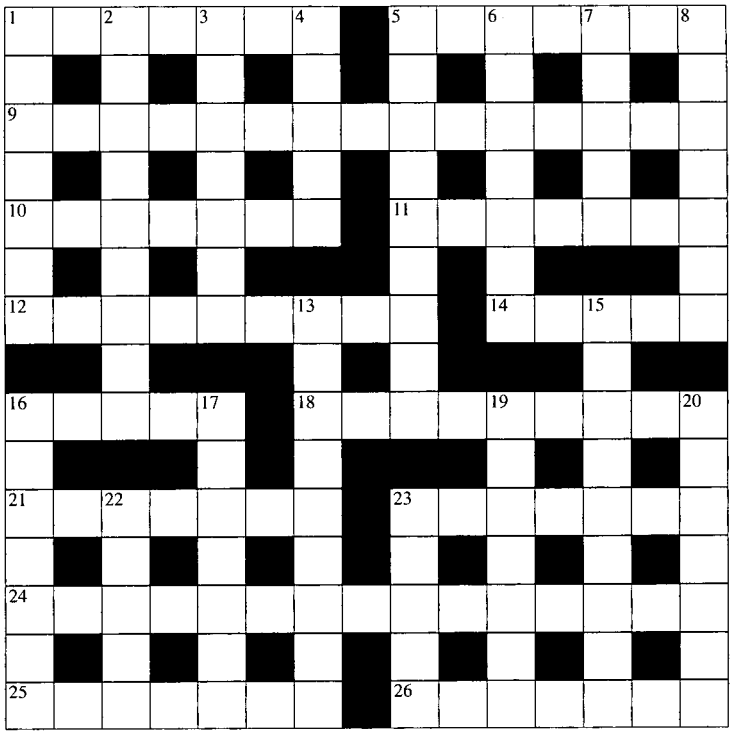
Political Puzzle

BY JOHN BARCLAY

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words—thus (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, such as USA, are treated as one word.



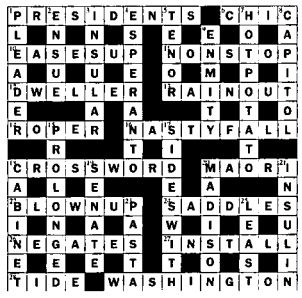
Across

1. News figure makes CNN toil madly. (7)
5. Proponent of short cut welfare? (3,4)
9. Agency arranged net trade map test. (5,10)
10. Dispersed tools in cosmetic fluids. (7)
11. African capital a.k.a. Palm Springs. (7)
12. Cosmetic makes a tenor odd. (9)
14. Dickens figure gathers wits before test start. (5)
16. Artificial spode smashed. (5)
18. Gauge dope unfairly for highly disciplined teacher. (9)
21. Shift spoons before start of reception for patron. (7)
23. Rode cab spinning oriental fabric. (7)
24. Set up venture near line for important agency. (8,7)
25. Football player changed gear in set off. (7)
26. Seder is changing lives. (7)

Down

1. Actors went first and made chess move. (7)
2. Oversights attributed to CIA in hostelries. (9)
3. Artistic vibration is a lot more shaking. (7)
4. Wants works audibly. (5)
5. Teed off after shut-out, covered everything. (9)
6. Floor covering from English city lacking luster. (4,3)
7. Last character in line-up of home games. (5)
8. Special Connecticut selection. (7)
13. Morning by beach and symbol. (9)
15. Fundamental from grade nine training. (9)
16. Voice distributing visas in gym. (7)
17. Has grid repaired for kitchen aid. (4,3)
19. Impressions of nothing in tree stands. (7)
20. Parts of shoes somewhat steely after end of hike. (7)
22. Remote route detour. (5)
23. Stripper kind of bonds, we hear. (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:



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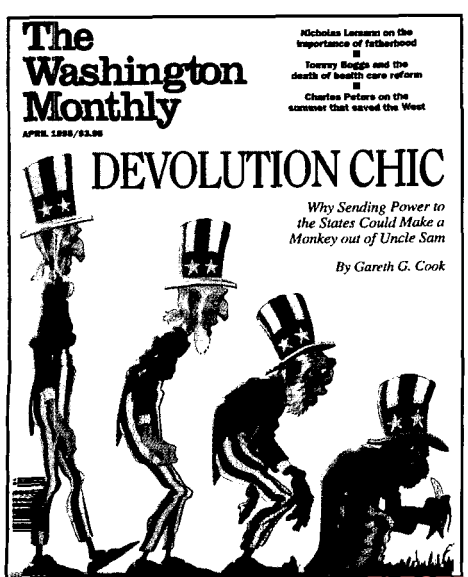

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What to Like about Today's Ike

Most memoirs burn bridges and settle scores. Colin Powell's is clearly not a finale, however, but a prologue

BY MATTHEW COOPER

My American Journey
Colin Powell with Joseph E. Persico, *Random House*, $25.95

Colin Powell's memoirs have become a publishing phenomenon, one of those rare events in which the usually obscure agreements surrounding a book contract have become the stuff of common knowledge. The $6 million advance, the book tour, the carefully considered interview with Barbara Walters—all are familiar by now. And as the hour of Powell's presidential decision approaches, the interest in the man and his career only grows.

What's less well-known is the book itself or at least parts of it. The rags-to-riches story has received plenty of attention: that Powell spoke Yiddish as a child, that he hails from Jamaican stock, and that he hung out with a multiracial gang in his old Bronx neighborhood. But other important strains in the book have been largely passed over.

For one thing, *My American Journey* has a lighter touch than these sorts of books tend to have. Most memoirs, literary or political, are aimed, in large measure, at obituary writers; they are a last, bald attempt to shape one's epitaph. And so they wind up puffing up one's role in controversial events. After Donald Regan resigned as White House chief of staff, for instance, he tapped out one of the great, score-settling memoirs—its revelations about Nancy Reagan's astrologer being the most memorable jab—in a book designed to exonerate Regan from Iran-Contra and other missteps of Reagan's second term. Other memoirs are written by the intellectually insecure and are designed to shore up one's position as a great thinker. The Kissinger memoirs and Nixon's many books exemplify this genre at its apex. For Powell, the memoir is a different sort of tool. Powell obviously sees his best days ahead of him, not behind. This is about promise, not retribution. His reflections, then, are less infused by the self-pity or pomposity that are the hallmark of memoirs meant to be a capstone. (Alas, they're short, too, on the kind of bridge-burning that can make memoirs so much fun.) Instead, *My American Journey* is accented with a breezy, self-deprecating sense of humor. One night finds Powell pounding an array of shots—from Creme de Menthe to gin—with his buddies well past midnight, only to be awakened early the next morning for a drill simulating a Soviet nuclear attack. Powell also tells a hilarious story about a GI under his command in Germany who had gotten a young German girl and her mother pregnant. "This situation," writes Powell, "had not been covered in the basic course at Fort Benning."

To be sure, the general is not above posturing; his account of the Gulf War is clearly designed to blunt the negative impression left by Bob Woodward's *The Commanders*, a book from which Powell emerged as something of a hypocrite—pro-Gulf War in public, a reluctant warrior behind the scenes. And Powell is not above sheer pabulum, like his declaration, typical

Matthew Cooper, a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly, *is a senior editor of* The New Republic *where he writes the "White House Watch" column.*

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of many in the book: "I treasure my family's British roots, but I love our America, land of opportunity."

Stronger, though, is a good-natured machismo that is fairly infectious. There's much in here about Powell's drinking, smoking, and cursing, the cumulative effect of which is to make Powell seem like the perfect guy to get a beer with or to have backing you up in a bar brawl. Given his love of spit and polish he's also quick to describe people by appearance; the neat and the physically strong garner his praise. Powell is impressed that Reagan's shoes bore no creases. He notes that his friend Richard Armitage is "built like an anchor." And, of his early career, Powell says one of his favorite rituals was "breaking starch": He and the other men in his unit would iron their clothes until they were so stiff that it took a broom handle to separate the cuffs.

But the most interesting thing about *My American Journey* is its story of the military bureaucracy and how it works. Like Bill Clinton, Powell has barely breathed in the private sector. But, unlike Clinton, Powell spent his formative years not in elective office, but as an organization man, where most of the action in the public sector takes place.

The general's rise through the bureaucracy was, no doubt, guided by admirable qualities—intelligence, amiability, determination. He spits out inspirational slogans like a Tony Robbins in uniform. But Powell's greatest asset was an ability to learn the rules of any game he played. When he was in ROTC at City College in New York, Powell joined an elite military society called the Pershing Rifles. Before Powell took over as the group's "pledge officer," potential recruits to the Pershing Rifles were given drinks and shown pornographic movies. Powell argued that the campus fraternities were already pushing beer and women. Better, he argued, to show the recruits films of the Pershing Rifles in the midst of drill competitions, in all their glory. The idea worked. The number of desirable recruits went up. "This was a defining moment for me," he writes, "the first small indication that I might be able to influence the outcome of events." It was also, of course, an early sign of Powell's talents as an organization man: He made the pledge officer into a position of influence.

At each of his many military assignments, Powell refined his talents. When he was assigned to a base in Massachusetts, Powell learned to write "Welcome Baby" letters to the newborns of men in his unit. "Another lesson learned and filed," Powell writes. "Make individuals feel important and part of something larger than themselves."

In Vietnam, Powell learned more important lessons. He saw the idiocy of the "body count"—the bureaucratic imperative that led American commanders and their South Vietnamese allies to overestimate the number of casualties they had inflicted on the Communists. He also saw the lunacy of behind-the-lines intelligence analysts. One who worked near him used regression analysis, in the spirit of a McNamara whiz kid, to calculate that the number of North Vietnamese mortars rose in inverse proportion to the phase of the moon. That came as no surprise to anyone actually fighting the war: The darker it got, the more the enemy fired.

Still, Powell pursued with gusto all the intellectual training the Army had to offer. He went to Fort Benning in Georgia for an Infantry Officers Advanced Course and later went on to become a White House Fellow, an MBA at George Washington University, and a graduate of the National War College. Even as each of these edu-assign-

Annie Leibovitz

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ments bolstered Powell's charmed résumé, though, they also threatened it. Throughout his career, Powell fretted that he would be pegged a defense intellectual, with plenty of policy experience but not enough time spent commanding troops, an essential rung on the military career ladder.

So much of Powell's story is about trying to get ever larger commands. Nowhere was Powell more threatened than at Fort Carson, Colorado, in 1981 when he ran afoul of the base commander Maj. Gen. John Hudachek. Hudachek and Powell clashed over a series of events, most notably how to handle the dismissal of an officer who was having an affair with the wife of an enlisted man. Hudachek gave Powell the Army's equivalent of pass-without-honors. Fortunately for Powell, Gen. John Wickham, an old boss and ally, plucked him for the job of Casper Weinberger's chief of staff, and from there, Powell rose through the Pentagon and the White House. Lesson: Always have a Rabbi to protect you.

Did Powell learn the right lessons from his tenure in the bureaucracy? The result is a mixed bag, but mostly favorable. I suspect *Monthly* readers will be delighted to know that Powell writes often about his suspicions that information is twisted as it flows from the bottom up, a longtime concern of this magazine. For instance, on the night of the KAL 007 shootdown in 1983, Powell was extremely skeptical, and rightfully so, about early reports that the plane had "reappeared" after falling off radar screens.

He learned other lessons as well. In the 1970s, when Powell was assigned to the Office of Management and Budget as a White House Fellow, he learned how little control the political appointees have over the bureaucracy. Later in the decade, Powell would help forge the new Department of Energy and saw first-hand how the agencies that made up the DOE behaved like "step children from different marriages." In the 1980s, Powell saw how bosses could be kept in the dark: During the early days of the Iran-Contra affair, the super-secret National Security Agency was reporting directly to the White House, leaving Powell and his boss Weinberger uninformed.

Powell was also wise enough to encourage his staff to argue with him, and while he had a temper, he warned his aides not to let it deter them from telling him what he needed to hear. Was Powell a *Washington Monthly*-style military reformer, fighting the more wasteful tendencies at the Pentagon? Obviously not. On the other hand, he was not so protective of the military that he fought its downsizing in the eighties and nineties. If anything, he managed the scaleback rather well.

All of this, though, is tarnished by Powell's lack of forthrightness on the Iran-Contra affair. He told prosecutors that Weinberger did not keep a diary, the later discovery of which, you'll recall, led to criminal charges against the former defense secretary. As Weinberger's assistant, Powell knew that Weinberger scribbled his thoughts on hundreds of small notepads. Powell lamely claims that he did not think that those pads constituted a diary. Powell can't bring himself to burn a boss; even now, he is painfully kind to anyone who was good to him.

Can a mili-crat like Powell be a good president? No one knows. But one thing that's certain is that Powell may well be able to offer the best defense of government power of any candidate around. Clinton still has the spirit of a government activist, but not the fortitude. Powell, on the other hand, is less abashed about his faith in public power and its uses. His personal biography is an example of how government can aid the individual; and the Armed Forces, which Powell headed, remain one of the few institutions that Americans still revere. His very presence in the presidential contest would be a compelling argument that government is not congenitally hapless. This, even more than race, may be the best argument for his candidacy, if not his election, as we await the general's big decision. □

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The Right Affirmative Action

A new book argues that race has gotten short shrift. The author is wrong—and so are our policies

BY RICHARD D. KAHLENBERG

Turning Back: The Retreat From Racial Justice in American Thought and Policy
Stephen Steinberg, *Beacon Press*, $25

At first glance, the title of Stephen Steinberg's book, *Turning Back: The Retreat From Racial Justice in American Thought and Policy*, might suggest a story about Pete Wilson and Bob Dole, Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas, or Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray. But Steinberg's real targets are those liberals (and former liberals) he believes have abandoned their commitment to racial justice: Bill Clinton and William Julius Wilson, Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Nathan Glazer, Cornel West and Mario Cuomo.

Steinberg, a Queens College sociologist, is principally concerned with an old, but highly significant, fight among liberals: Should efforts to help the disadvantaged focus on race or on class? When concerns about race and class conflict with each other, as they sometimes do, which interest should prevail? When it comes to today's hot issue, affirmative action, should the left support the kind of policy that also helps poor whites (as class-based approaches do) or rich blacks (as race-based approaches do)?

Steinberg, a firm believer in dispensing aid by racial criteria, argues that his side is losing the debate. Following the civil rights movement, liberals have been abandoning the idea of helping minorities per se which, he says, is very bad. His book, an intellectual history of one of the country's most important issues, is interesting and well-written. But it is also deeply flawed. If anything, the current debate over affirmative action shows that, despite some undercurrents of doubt, most liberals are still, like Steinberg, dedicated to the notion of policies based on race—and that is the real bad news.

Turning Back begins in the 1940s, well before the civil rights era. At the time, argues Steinberg, traditional figures on the left—like Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal and Columbia historian Henry Steele Commager—were so consumed by class inequality that they did not recognize the need to address racial prejudice. Steinberg notes, for example, that in the 1300 pages of Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*, which details virtually every facet of American race relations, there is "no mention of the need for civil rights legislation." At the time, he adds, both *The Nation* and *The New Republic*, the leading liberal journals, tended to "subsume race to class" even going "so far as to portray lynching during the Depression as having more to do with class than with race." Steinberg's critique of liberals in the 1940s is right on target: Too many of them overlooked racism. Lynchings and segregation were not targeted at some amorphous "underclass" but at the American black.

In the fifties and sixties, liberals (and Ameri-

Richard D. Kahlenberg is writing a book about class-based affirmative action for Basic Books.

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ca) finally faced the fact of racial discrimination, passing civil rights laws and adopting race-specific policies to address the legacy of past discrimination. But it is here—with his unlikely heroic duo, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Richard Nixon—that Steinberg's argument begins to strain.

Steinberg puts great stock in King. *Turning Back* begins with a dedication to "Martin Luther King's celebrated dream." Steinberg quotes a passage from King's *Why We Can't Wait* in which King seems to endorse preferences based on race: "America must seek its own way of atoning for the injustices she has inflicted upon her Negro citizens." Steinberg also cites King's apparent denunciation of those who oppose racial preferences. "Whenever this issue of compensatory or preferential treatment for the Negro is raised, some of our friends recoil in horror. The Negro should be granted equality, they agree; but he should ask nothing more."

But this is misleading. In the very same chapter in which King demanded an atonement for past injustices, he also proposed a Bill of Rights for the Disadvantaged, to benefit poor blacks and whites alike. King knew that any program to help the disadvantaged would certainly address the nation's racist past by disproportionately benefitting blacks. But he affirmatively wanted to reach out and help poor whites as well. "It is a matter of simple justice," he wrote, "that America, in dealing creatively with the task of raising the Negro from backwardness, should also be rescuing a large stratum of the forgotten white poor." That is the real King.

There is "great irony," Steinberg continues, that racial preferences were begun not by Democrat Lyndon Johnson, but by Republican Richard Nixon. It was Nixon, he reminds us, who imposed hiring quotas on the construction unions in Philadelphia and, later, required most federal contractors to adopt race-based hiring goals and timetables.

Wedge Theory

But Steinberg's reading of Nixon is also flawed. He is correct in saying that Nixon (not Johnson) launched the effort to impose racial preferences, but he fails to probe and explain what he only concedes as an "irony." Why would Nixon, not generally known as a champion of civil rights, embrace a strategy of racial quotas which even Johnson had rejected?

Steinberg mentions, but quickly dismisses, historian Hugh Davis Graham's theory that Nixon used the Philadelphia Plan "as an opportunity to drive a wedge into the coalition between blacks and Democratic trade unions." But it is clear, from Nixon aide John Ehrlichman and others, that the divisive nature of affirmative action intrigued Nixon, and that he delighted in watching white labor and civil rights groups spar over the affirmative action program he had instituted. By 1972, Democrats had embraced racial preferences, Nixon was campaigning against the very program that he had created, and the flight of white, working-class voters from the Democrats to the Republicans was underway.

Steinberg's analysis is no more convincing when he comes to the post–civil rights era, which he sees largely as a backlash against affirmative action led by liberals or erstwhile liberals. The leading rogue is Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the assistant secretary of labor under Lyndon Johnson and author of the report, *The Negro Family*. Steinberg accuses Moynihan of subverting Johnson's celebrated 1965 address at Howard University, which Moynihan co-authored with Richard Goodwin. The pair wrote that America should go beyond equal opportunity to "equal results," but then with "Machiavellian genius" they steered Johnson's speech away from the one "sure-fire method for achieving equal results: instituting a system of [racial] preference." Harvard sociologist Nathan Glazer, another erstwhile liberal, also led the charge against racial preference, Steinberg observes, publishing the influential critique, *Affirmative Discrimination* in 1975.

The views of Moynihan and Glazer were also adopted by black intellectuals, he says, like William Julius Wilson and Cornel West. Wilson's 1978 landmark, *The Declining Significance of Race*, gave cover to whites who wanted to argue that class had become a greater impediment to poor blacks than race—and that programs must be pitched in universal terms to be politically acceptable. And although West's 1993 collection of essays, *Race Matters*, might appear from the title to be a retort to Wilson's book, it carries substantially the same message.

Steinberg then mocks white politicians, partic-

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ularly Bill Clinton, for echoing the "backlash" as a way of avoiding tough racial problems. But Steinberg has it backwards: American politicians usually talk about race as a way of avoiding more intractable class-based problems. Race is the American proxy for class, in part because it is in the interests of those in power to frame deep class divisions in racial terms, virtually assuring that they will not be discussed in a meaningful way.

Moreover, Steinberg's portrait of contemporary liberalism's "retreat from race" is completely at odds with the reality of the Democratic Party's continuing adherence to race-based remedies. Steinberg is right that a number of liberals have begun to question racial preferences. Joseph Califano, Jimmy Carter's secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, has criticized preferences in recent years, as has Susan Estrich, Michael Dukakis's 1988 presidential campaign manager. And there has been thoughtful criticism of racial preferences in *The American Prospect*, *The New Republic*, and the pages of this magazine.

But among Democratic politicians, opposition to racial preferences is not yet politically correct. We are now at a stage where a liberal Democratic lawmaker can complain to *U.S. News & World Report*: "I'll be goddamned why the son of a wealthy black businessman should have a slot reserved for that race when the son of a white auto-assembly worker is excluded." But we are not at the point where that Democrat will risk being identified. Among Democratic officials, Connecticut Senator Joseph Lieberman is a lonely voice in opposition to race-based affirmative action. Indeed, at the end of the day, every one of Steinberg's "villains"—West, Wilson, Moynihan, even Glazer—supports racial preferences.

And Bill Clinton, of course, has turned out to be a stalwart supporter of affirmative action. While Steinberg could not have known the conclusion of the President's review of affirmative action policies at the time the book went to print, Clinton had given ample evidence in his first two years in office of just how comfortable he is with race-based decision making. Clinton's highly public commitment to diversity in his cabinet was followed by a fateful decision, in July 1994, to push the frontiers of affirmative action to untested limits. Clinton said he supported the firing of an equally qualified white school teacher in Piscataway, New Jersey, not as a remedy for past discrimination, but in order to promote faculty diversity. Clinton is only willing to concede that angry white males are having a hard time psychologically. His implication is that they have no legitimate beef when their skin color is used against them; he seems to say that all they need is a good shrink. In the modern era liberals have retreated some from the rhetoric of race, but they still largely support race-based policies.

Despite the book's fundamental flaws, *Turning Back* does contain some interesting insights. Steinberg notes, for example, that the "white backlash" of the 1960s cannot be implicitly justified as a response to rioting and the excesses of the Black Power movement. George Wallace's strong showing in Northern Democratic primaries in 1964 preceded those events, and was a response to the antidiscriminatory laws passed by Congress. And Steinberg is right to criticize Myrdal's widely revered text on race in America. Steinberg asks: "What are we to think of a book—heralded as a classic—whose title reduces racial oppression to a 'dilemma'?"

But in the end, Steinberg's broader case is simply too hard to make. In the internal debate about race and class, Steinberg and his allies are not struggling; they are winning. While there are strong undercurrents of opposition to racial preferences on the left, there has been no grand public retreat from them, much less from race generally. During President Clinton's review of affirmative action policies earlier this year, civil rights groups weighed in forcefully, while the traditional representative of class interests—organized labor—was largely irrelevant.

In fact, it is precisely because Steinberg and his allies have largely won the debate that the left finds itself in such a mess today. Democrats have strongly opposed California's Civil Rights Initiative, for example, which is designed to eliminate race and gender preferences. Instead of pointing out that the real inequalities in America today are based on class—and that the most intelligent social policy would target people based on their disadvantaged background, not the color of their skin—too many liberals are stuck defending a strategy that is antiquated and poisonous. This is a sad fact, and one for which liberals are likely to pay more and more dearly at the polls. Then we shall see the true meaning of the phrase "turning back." □

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Memo of the Month

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL
Division of Operations-Management

MEMORANDUM OM 95-65 August 23, 1995

TO: All Regional Directors, Officers-in-Charge, and Resident Officers

FROM: B. Allan Benson, Acting Associate General Counsel

SUBJECT: Form Number Change "Notice to Employees"

It has been brought to our attention that in at least one election, employees may have refused to vote because of their religious beliefs; that is, as regards Form NLRB-666 (Notice to Employees), they interpreted "666" as the NLRB's display of the "mark of the devil." Therefore, to ensure the form's number does not discourage voter participation, the form has been renumbered to Form NLRB-5492 and 5492 SP (Spanish version).

Replacement versions have been ordered and will be sent to you by August 31, 1995. Forms with the "666" should be discarded when the new forms are received.

If you have any questions, please contact your Assistant General Counsel.

B. A. B.

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Political Booknotes

Risky Business: An Insider's Account of the Disaster at Lloyd's of London
Martin Mayer and Elizabeth Luessenhop
Simon & Schuster, $25
By S.C. Gwynne

You may know Lloyd's of London as the venerable, old-line British insurance house where the employees wear red tailcoats with brass buttons and where policies are written on all sorts of oddball risks that no one else has the imagination to insure: Betty Grable's legs, Bob Feller's fastball, the Space Shuttle, offshore oil rigs, and the Dallas Cowboys. This is the quaint Lloyd's of commercial legend: the company that would insure anything, and make money on it; the company that, out of its own deep sense of honor and tradition, never failed to pay off a claim.

This is also the company that is now plunged into a desperate scandal that is already counted in the tens of billions of dollars. It may soon enough destroy one of the world's oldest and most successful commercial institutions. Thousands of investors have already been ruined, and the lawsuits, claims, and counterclaims against Lloyd's, its agencies, managing companies, and brokers have become thickly layered and intricately interlaced. How Lloyd's fell—from the world's most respected insurance underwriter in 1980 to the blundering scapegrace we see today—is the subject of *Risky Business: An Insider's Account of the Disaster at Lloyd's of London* by Martin Mayer and Elizabeth Luessenhop.

Luessenhop is indeed an "insider," one of the thousands of American sponsors of Lloyd's insurance syndicates who lost money, and she is out to expose the perpetrators. Martin Mayer is the veteran financial writer whose book *The Bankers* is one of the best primers ever written on the banking industry. At its best, *Risky Business* cracks along in a clean, friendly narrative style. At its worst, which is not infrequent, the authors indulge at length in the sort of adversarial and highly complex legal minutiae one might expect from an "insider" in several of the lawsuits against Lloyd's. But Luessenhop and Mayer do not claim to be neutral or objective; they aim to show how $29 billion in insurance liabilities got hung on 33,000 people who will never be able to pay them off, and how Lloyd's has lost enough to wipe out all of its profits since World War II. The tale, regardless of an occasionally bumpy narrative, is still riveting.

It begins with what most of us would consider financial legerdemain: the way wealthy investors made money by putting up the capital behind the insurance policies that Lloyd's wrote. The "Names"—as the investors are known—didn't really invest anything at all. They merely pledged their assets, while the assets themselves—stocks, bonds, or land—continued to make money. "The new Name very visibly got something for nothing," write Mayer and Luessenhop. "You, not the bank and not Lloyd's, continued to own the stocks and bonds or CDs you had deposited as collateral ... You continued to receive the dividends and interest on your securities, and if their price went up, you got the benefit. You kept your investments, and you made something extra by using them as collateral at the same time." In some years the income the Names received from Lloyd's actually exceeded their income on pledged investments. It was a classic double dip, one that the landed classes in England have found hugely profitable for several hundred years.

The only way Names could lose money was if their insurance syndicate was forced to pay out more in claims than it took in as premiums. That had happened so rarely, and the amounts involved were historically so small, that Names tended to forget the one annoying little clause in their agreement with Lloyd's. According to their agreement, they not only pledged specific assets, they also assumed "unlimited liability" for claims made against Lloyd's by its customers.

Unlimited liability is an interesting concept, particularly when applied to thousands of middle and upper-middle class investors from the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States—including Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer—who became Names at Lloyd's syndicates that had insured such clients as industrial polluters and makers of asbestos. (Luessenhop's syndicate specialized in insurance for toxic waste, product liability, and malpractice insurance.) Unlimited liability means that investors personally have to make good on never-ending, multibillion-dollar claims against Lloyd's by victims of asbestosis, for example; it means that they are directly liable for every penny owed, even if it means sacrificing every piece of property they own. The claims, according to the authors, arrive in the form of urgent "cash calls" that continue until the Name is bankrupt. The Name can never leave the syndicate and is essentially forever liable (beyond death, as well, since estates are then raided to satisfy calls) for unlimited amounts of money.

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Such calls began in earnest in 1991 and have continued unabated since then. In 1993, for example, Lloyd's had $4.5 billion in losses, all to be made good by the poor Names. At least 30 Names—and possibly many more—have committed suicide because of their losse. These losses were the outcome of imprudent risks—risks, as with asbestosis, that often resulted in claims over many years or decades.

These losses also arose from a "reinsurance spiral" that resulted in billions of dollars of liability. Reinsurance is typically bought by an insurance company wanting to lay off some of the risk it has taken; reinsurers themselves can then lay off the risk, ad infinitum, in a process called "retrocession." Lloyd's did this compulsively and incestuously, reinsuring itself through its own syndicates. Syndicates were even reinsuring each other. The problem is that, when a multibillion-dollar liability comes home to roost, it tends to endanger all the syndicates involved in insurance and reinsurance. The 1980s were unfortunately rich in the sort of catastrophes that create huge damages: earthquakes, hurricanes, air crashes, oil rig fires, and product liability cases. Lloyd's syndicates, in their Pollyanna-ish way, had jumped in to underwrite such policies with both feet and, as the bad news mounted (and their fees as well), steadfastly delivered only good news to their investors and sponsors. It was apparently in no one's interest to tell the Names what was going on.

This was all done after Lloyd's had been effectively removed from all outside regulatory supervision in the early 1980s in a way reminiscent of much of the banking and savings and loan industries in the U.S. In Lloyd's case it was even more extreme: The company was allowed to regulate itself.

As Mayer and Luessenhop tell it, Lloyd's losses were not simply a product of management stupidity or of a run of bad luck. The men who ran Lloyd's, they argue, knew precisely what was happening. They knew it so well, in fact, that in the 1980s Lloyd's managers actively recruited thousands of new Names to take on the older risks that had begun to appear quite dangerous, all the while taking fat fees and reserving the lower-risk business for themselves and other insiders. This has been the substance of many lawsuits, including one by 3,000 plaintiffs against a syndicate called Gooda Walker for a claim of $1.3 billion—the largest lawsuit in English history. Though the plaintiffs won that suit, none of them

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have recovered any money.

Though the worst of the liabilities seem now to be known, there is a serious question of whether Lloyd's can continue to exist. If it goes down, it will be yet another in a long line of victims felled by greed and stupidity. But above all Lloyd's stands as yet another monument to financial deregulation, another warning that even the most venerable financial institution in the world is not immune to the sort of excesses common in the latter twentieth century. If it can happen at Lloyd's, it can happen anywhere.

S.C. Gwynne is the Austin Bureau Chief for Time.

The Luck Business: The Devastating Consequences and Broken Promises of America's Gambling Explosion

Robert Goodman

Free Press, $23

By Joshua Wolf Shenk

The "nice" side of town in Atlantic City is a stretch one block wide and less than 10 blocks long. This is what tourists see: velvet-soaked casinos, a Boardwalk lined with shops and concession stands, faux-everything. The rest of the city is a ghetto—cracked concrete coated with broken bottles and refuse. With the exception of pawn shops, which are plentiful, storefronts are mostly boarded up.

Casinos were supposed to revive this faded resort town. Instead, they hastened its decline. Rather than acting like a sponge soaking up visitors' money, as in Las Vegas, Atlantic City's casinos became more like rats, gnawing away at the remains of small restaurants and hotels. Out-of-state magnates like Donald Trump built self-enclosed fortresses along the beach. Jobs went to out-of-staters, and the problems of gambling addicts and increased crime stayed right at home.

You might expect this story to serve as a cautionary tale for towns attracted to the flashing lights of slot machines. Instead, casinos are enjoying unprecedented popularity among politicians and urban planners. Cities in rural South Dakota and Colorado mining country, in Louisiana and dozens of other states, have turned to gambling for a jolt of economic energy. They keep chasing the dream of Las Vegas, only to find themselves in the nightmare of Atlantic City. The big-spending tourists rarely come. Little new money enters the economy. The money that is spent is diverted from other area businesses.

Why do so many towns—from New Orleans to Joliet, Illinois to Davenport, Iowa—keep falling into the gambling trap? As Robert Goodman explains in *The Luck Business*, it's not because citizens are clamoring for more opportunities to gamble. In fact, every state-wide referendum to expand gambling since New Jersey's in 1976 has failed. The casino boosters are the industry itself and its eager followers—politicians seeking quick-fixes for deep-seated economic woes (and, sometimes, campaign contributions as well).

The pattern is depressingly familiar. It starts with vast promises: "This may be as important to Davenport as the Bill of Rights and the Magna Carta," one Iowa official said of Davenport's first casino license. "Riverboat gambling will start a rebirth of Joliet's center," predicted that Illinois town's city manager in 1992. "It will save us five years in developing our downtown."

The cities spend millions in infrastructure—readying the docks for riverboats, building access roads, expanding water and sewer systems. Next comes a high-profile media spectacle as the ribbon is cut, and the first gamblers throw their dice. Finally, after the hype comes the crash of unrealized expectations. Consider the case of Joliet. Like Atlantic City, Goodman reports, the town saw "a continuing stream of day-tripping gamblers, who stayed at the casinos and then left." No hotel was built. No new non-casino businesses were created, with the exception of a single take-out coffee shop.

The country is paying a dear price for this failed experiment. The rush to build casinos—and the concurrent expansion of lotteries and electronic gambling—has led to an enormous growth in the number of Americans who gamble. In 1990, 46 million people visited casinos. In 1993, that figure was 92 million. The number of gambling addicts, whose enormous debts lead to crime and broken families, is exploding. The problem is bound to get worse as a generation comes of age in an era of state-sanctioned gambling.

After the introduction of casinos; Atlantic City saw its crime rate triple in just three years, South Dakota endured a huge increase in bankruptcies and divorce claims. Between 1991 and 1994 Louisiana suffered a fivefold increase in the number of people seeking help for problem gambling.

The crazy thing about this gambling epidemic—and this is why Goodman's book should be read by anyone concerned with the crisis in public life today—is that political leaders are actively worsening the crisis. Seduced by the promises of tourist money and hundreds of new jobs, politicians cheerlead for expanded gambling and abdicate any regulatory role in the process. With lottery advertising, state money is even pitched in to make gambling seem like harmless fun.

At one point, Goodman quotes a gambling magnate talking straight about his plans: "When we put 50 slot machines in, I always consider them 50 more mousetraps. You have to do something to catch a mouse. It's our duty to extract as much money from the customers as we can and send them home with a smile on their face."

As this book demonstrates, the mice these businesses catch aren't just gamblers. They are towns, states—even the country itself—that are paying the price for a failed public policy.

Jihad v. McWorld

Benjamin Barber

Times Books, $25

By Gareth Cook

Last year, I went to Middleboro, a small town in southeastern Massachusetts, to

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write a piece about Rwanda. It had all the makings of your classic "shrinking planet" story. Here was Manzi Kanobana, a Tutsi teen from the heart of Africa, now an exchange student at a small New England high school. To these kids, Manzi seemed strange at first, but he played a mean game of soccer and quickly made friends. His home country's quirky customs caught on—like the midnight candy Christmas tradition—and, before long, he had plenty of friends with whom to watch TV—usually CNN's "International Hour." Middleboro, meet Kigali.

But that spring, amidst CNN's reports of Coca Cola's move to Prague and the most recent opening of a McDonald's franchise in Budapest, came chaotic stories of Rwanda's self-destruction. The president's plane had been shot down, and the nation's two tribes—the Hutus and the minority Tutsis—fell upon each other with an apocalyptic fury. One afternoon, I sat in a sparsely-furnished apartment, with Manzi's aunt sitting at the table next to me, crying softly as her young nephew explained, bewildered, how men came with machetes and executed most of his family.

Is the world coming together, or is it ripping apart at the seams?

This is the driving question behind *Jihad vs. McWorld*, an important new book by Rutgers political scientist Ben Barber. This book, like Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* or Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*, is an attempt to make sense of what is still awkwardly known as "the post-Cold War world." Barber concerns himself with what he sees as the two dominant international trends of our time: "McWorld integration," based on a rapidly growing world consumer culture, and "Jihad retribalization," splintering once-settled nations. He pointedly argues that although "McWorld" and "Jihad" are in seeming opposition, the two forces are in fact partners, attacking democracies at their roots. Yet, this is not a book solely for foreign-policy mavens. Barber asks provocative questions about the direction Americans are taking—as a country and as a culture.

For a while, it was fashionable to point out that the United States didn't win the Cold War—Japan did. Indeed, Japan did emerge from the superpower struggle as a real economic power unfettered by punishing levels of defense spending. But Barber argues that the real prize should go to Mickey Mouse. With the fall of communism, the last great empire, there is nothing to stop a distinctly American kind of consumerism, which gives "McWorld" its name, from sweeping the globe. Kentucky Fried Chicken has outposts in Nanjing, Xian, Hangzhou. American pop music—Madonna, Bruce Springsteen, Nirvana—can be heard in cafes from Tunis to Warsaw. Reruns of old television shows like "Dallas," "Wheel of Fortune," and "The Simpsons" are top programs across vast swaths of the planet. Modern communication and transportation have made borders ever more porous by default, even as the free-traders have made them more so by design.

There was a historical moment, right after the Berliners hacked down their wall, when the "McWorld" info-revolution seemed to have a distinctly human face. Fax machines and photocopiers, radio and television, all helped to undercut totalitarianism. They spread ideas and fueled discontent by showing the freedoms (and the consumer goodies) to be had in the West. Even MTV's claim that it helped bring down the Wall had a ring of truth: It was Madonna versus Marx, and Marx didn't stand a chance.

But the same forces that toppled old-line communists are also bulldozing the world's cultural landscape. Television, movies, and modern advertising are making more and more of the planet look more and more the same. *Terminator 2* was the number one film in Argentina, Malaysia and Mexico in 1991. For Indonesian youth, tea is out; Coke is in. T-shirts with American pop icons are a hot commodity throughout the Third World—and the Japanese pay upwards of $100 for a pair of Levis.

None of this is new, of course. As radio spread in the 1960s, it was already becoming difficult to escape the Beatles. The theme of traditional local cultures faltering under the onslaught of Western consumerism is a sad one, but a familiar one. Now, though, the process has accelerated.

There is also more to "McWorld" fears than the vague, claustrophobic sense that all the world's becoming an American strip mall. Control over the increasingly powerful info-entertainment sector is growing more and more concentrated. These new agglomerations sprawl across traditional media divisions—movies, television, cable, books, producers and distributors. By the 1990s, according to Ben Bagdikian, author of *The Media Monopoly*, 17 intermedia conglomerates owned half of the revenues from all media. Since this book was written, Disney announced it was going to purchase Capitol Records/ABC. Then Time-Warner announced it would join forces with Turner Broadcasting; the combination would own HBO, Cinemax, CNN, Time-Life books, a slew of magazines (including *People*, *Money*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Time*) and a variety of other entertainment interests.

This is especially worrisome for the news business. After World War II, about 8 in 10 American newspapers were independently owned; by the beginning of this decade, about eight in ten were owned by one of the big chains. What of the network news? NBC is owned by General Electric. Now, Westinghouse wants to take over CBS, and Disney has made a deal for ABC, "where more Americans get their news than [from] any other source." Don't hold your breath for NBC to do a story on how GE continues to screw taxpayers on defense contracts.

Perhaps I am paranoid, but I sometimes feel that all the shows on television (with the possible exception of "The X-Files") are already produced by one big machine somewhere in the

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southern California desert. Do we want this fantasy to become a reality? The lesson of Barber's book, then, is an old one, but one worth repeating. Capitalism is a wonderful system, adaptable, full of vitality and, quite literally, creative. But capitalism is not synonymous with democracy and, unchecked, it can threaten democracy.

The backlash against capitalism and Westernization is the theme of Barber's second, less successful, section. Granted, the ancient force he names "Jihad" is psychological and difficult to define. In this book, it lies somewhere in the nexus of the human desire for community and hatred for others. Jihad, we are told, is "communities of blood rooted in exclusion and hatred." Yet he travels far from this definition, including everything from bona fide tribal hatred, like that of Rwanda, to the Euro-skeptics who resist European integration, to the American militia movement.

The crucial distinction here lies between protective nationalism, based on cultural preservation, and the uglier versions which are moved by hatred and aim at separation. It is the difference between what the Polish dissident-philosopher Czeslaw Milosz liked to call "a sense of belonging" and the Bosnian Serbs who want to "cleanse" the land of other ethnic groups and carve out their own state.

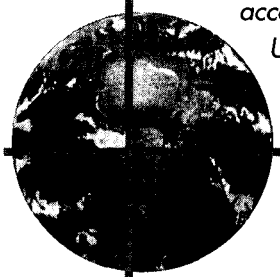
Barber does a better job in his analysis of the overtly political implications of "Jihad." Among post-war liberals, political movements which have "self-government" as their aim have long enjoyed an aura of moral authority. (Isn't that why we fought the Revolutionary War?) But Barber is among the thinkers who have rightly made the case that these movements no longer deserve our reflexive support. Quebec, for example, has long talked about seceding from Canada. Yet can we be sure that this new state, built around its distinctive brand of French culture, would be just as respectful of its own minorities? What is to be done when these minorities have had enough and demand—as the Cree Indians already have—their own nation-state? The experts say there are roughly 6,000 languages spoken on the planet. Should every one have a country of its own?

It is true that there are some places—like Ireland or Cyprus—that are so deeply divided, with hatreds so ingrained, that separation is the only solution. But these break-away states then tend to be less hospitable to the basic attitudes—tolerance, compromise, pluralism—that we know are necessary for democracy to function smoothly over time.

Barber's real contribution is this focus on democracy and on the ways "Jihad" and "McWorld" cooperate to undercut it. At the heart of his argument is the "citizen"—the person who has learned the lessons of compromise and pluralism, who believes in a common good that is more important than his or her own narrow self-interest. Citizens

HAS THE ARMS RACE ENDED?

International arms sales today are, if anything, even more competitive and less accountable than they were a decade ago. And, contrary to popular belief, the U.S. share in the global arms trade has increased. Senior Congressional analyst William W. Keller offers a fascinating inside account of the contemporary arms trade—and argues that it's time to try a new approach!



ARM IN ARM The Political Economy of the Global Arms Trade
William W. Keller

"**HIGHLY TOPICAL** and, indeed, **FASCINATING**."
—ANDREW J. PIERRE, author of *The Global Politics of Arms Sales*

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Civil War presidents found slavery morally repugnant, but politically explosive, and therefore tried to find a host of watered-down compromises to postpone dealing with the oppressive issue. Almost every Northern presidential contender from 1787 to 1860 had a back-to-Africa trump card stored up his sleeve, including Lincoln, who spoke of sending blacks "to Liberia—to their own native land."

For example, not only did Thomas Jefferson bring many of his 175 slaves with him to Washington, D.C., but the man who described slavery as a "cruel war against human nature itself" in the original version of the Declaration of Independence lived in a city where "one could stand in the Capitol Building doorway and watch processions of chained men, women, and children shuffling to the pens to await sale and new southern homes." Despite the fact that much of this is well-known history, O'Reilly has performed a singular service by stringing together the racist Jeffersonian litany—made famous in his book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, which claimed that people of color were scientifically "proven" inferior and, in some cases, were more ape than human.

Somewhere around the end of the first section, however, O'Reilly's unyielding presentation becomes exhausting. In a historical work such as this, it's imperative to place monumental figures like Jefferson and Lincoln in the context of their times. To Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, for example, having dinner with Booker T. Washington was considered being enlightened on the race issue; today that looks like a token effort. How should they be judged?

O'Reilly also defines Franklin Delano Roosevelt's legacy to black America by his refusal to sponsor an anti-lynching bill. O'Reilly is generally unconvinced that the New Deal did anything to alleviate segregation. Yet he fails to adequately account for the Southern-controlled Congress. FDR had to battle arch-segregationists, such as Theodore Bilbo, who denounced every New Deal measure with an unrestrained vengeance. And because it would not fit his thesis, O'Reilly obfuscates the reality that FDR allowed First Lady Eleanor to champion the rights of blacks in a few-holds-barred fashion unmatched since the days of William Lloyd Garrison.

In the same vein, O'Reilly argues that Dwight Eisenhower encouraged segregation but never discusses his order to mix black and white blood in World War II hospitals because "people were all the same." And John F. Kennedy was, by the standards of his time, something more than a "civil rights minimalist." O'Reilly's allergy to anything hopeful hampers his ability to distinguish between the bad and the truly awful. George Bush deserves whatever venom O'Reilly spews about the Willie Horton exploitation, which looks even worse eight years later. O'Reilly's portrait of Carter, however, is mean-spirited and superficial. He never mentions that Carter was the first American president ever to visit sub-Saharan Africa (Nigeria in 1978), that he denounced South African apartheid, that he helped oversee the smooth transition of white supremacist Rhodesia to majority rule Zimbabwe, or that Carter had the enthusiastic support of many black leaders.

Similarly, his closing section, "Rectors and Souljahs," pummels Bill Clinton beyond recognition. "Bill Clinton," O'Reilly fumes, "calculated that he could not win in 1992, unless he used Sister Souljah to bait Jesse Jackson, put a black chain gang in a crime control ad, golfed at a segregated club with a TV camera crew in tow, and allowed that search for a serviceable vein in Rickey Ray Rector's [the black Arkansas man Clinton had executed during the campaign] arm." But Clinton's record, notably his recent defense of affirmative action, makes clear he's no George Wallace, or even George Bush.

These flaws don't change the fact that there is important historical material here. By forcing us to come to grips with presidential race-baiting, O'Reilly touches a nerve we too often ignore. His thorough, and thoroughly dispiriting, chronicle suggests that, if nothing else, Colin Powell offers an antidote to 200 years of shame.

Douglas Brinkley, director of the Eisenhower Center for American Studies at the University of New Orleans, is the author of biographies of Dean Acheson, James Forrestal, and Jimmy Carter (forthcoming).

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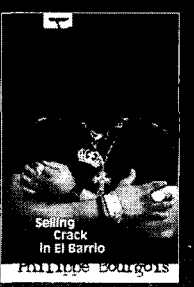

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are essential for a democracy to hold together.

Yet Barber sees citizens as a vanishing breed. The threat posed by "Jihad" is more or less clear—blood feuds do not inspire good citizenship. But "McWorld's" pervasive consumer culture, he argues, is really the greater threat. The attitudes that make for a true citizen are learned in "public spaces," in what is more commonly called "civil society." These "places"—the public park, the voluntary organization, the public school—are dying. In their place are shopping malls and suburban walled communities; watching television has replaced the chat on the porch or the walk around the block. It is much more common for the evening news to refer to Americans as "consumers" than as "citizens."

Not only are "McWorld" and "Jihad" both bad for democracy, Barber concludes, but they feed off one another, leaving civil society in a tough spot. "Jihad" can use the technology and propaganda power of "McWorld" to rekindle old hatreds. "McWorld's" leveling—its unfettered capitalism, its spiritual emptiness—can push people into the clutches of Jihad, searching for meaning and finding hatred.

Throughout, Barber makes a convincing case. My main gripe with his book is that it is painted with broad strokes, which can be frustrating. He writes with grace and verve, but, at times, he also goes overboard: "They are accelerating toward the limits of nature—the speed of light that defines the interactions of cyberspace—in quest of a palliative to (or is it a catalyst for?) their restlessness." And he throws around the word "virtual" an awful lot, without it meaning much.

But Barber's book is about the big picture, which he describes well. He would be happy to agree, I suspect, that there are plenty of exceptions to his sweeping arguments—and even signs of hope. After Manzi, the Rwandan who came to Middleboro, got his awful news, the local Unitarian church got together with his high school friends. They brought food to his house. They raised money to bring his surviving relatives to America. They even started a college fund for him. It's a true story, and Disney doesn't own the rights to it.

Nixon's Piano: Presidents and Racial Politics From Washington to Clinton
Kenneth O'Reilly
Free Press, $27
by Douglas Brinkley

In Disney World's "Hall of Presidents," robotic incarnations of all 42 of our chief executives, from George Washington to Bill Clinton, gesture stiffly to turnstile tourists. It's among the theme park's most popular family attractions—millions of Americans each year leave the exhibit feeling proud of their star-spangled nation and bounce into Futureland humming the Battle Hymn of the Republic. But after reading Kenneth O'Reilly's *Nixon's Piano*, a devastating critique of the executive branch's institutionalized indifference to racism, any feelings of pride in our presidents will quickly dissipate.

O'Reilly's spotlight on our presidents exposes bigotry and racism from the whole distinguished lot. Only Abraham Lincoln and Lyndon Johnson escape with their integrity somewhat intact. O'Reilly, who teaches history at the University of Alaska, writes like a relentless prosecutor marshalling evidence against 42 defendants, collecting every racist slur or off-the-cuff innuendo. From studying forgotten memoirs, O'Reilly presents a convincing case against the American presidency.

O'Reilly's title comes from an anecdote, first told by civil rights activist Roger Wilkins in his 1982 autobiography *A Man's Life*, of an unforgettable evening in 1970, when President Richard Nixon and Vice President Spiro Agnew surprised the white elite at the Gridiron Club by performing a manic version of "Dixie." Nixon played the piano, and Agnew accompanied him in a "darky dialect," while the Washington Brahmins hooted and hollered them on. The Republican Party at that time had their "Southern strategy" in full swing: "a belief that presidential elections can be won only by following the doctrines and rituals of white over black." This story, well told by O'Reilly, is a perfect warning of the collective perversity the reader is about to encounter.

From 1866 to 1948, for example, approximately 5,000 African-Americans died at the hands of lynch mobs without a single president denouncing the atrocities. Most pre-

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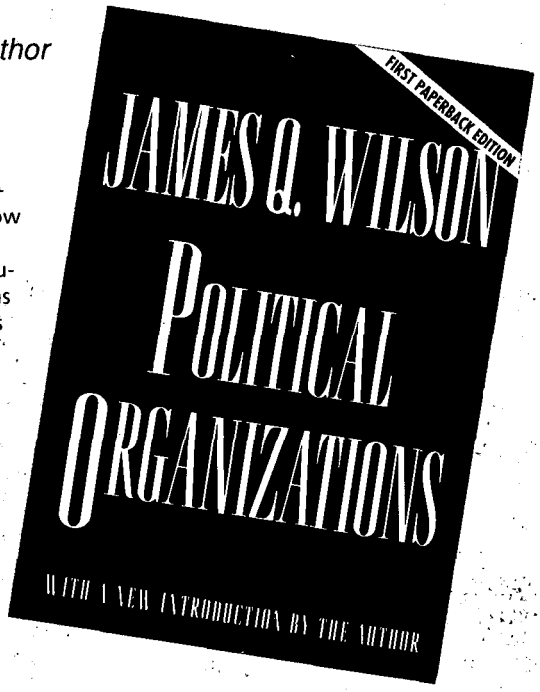

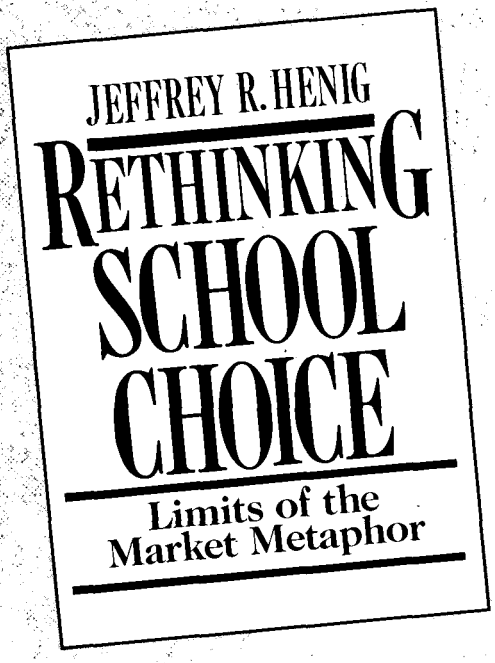

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